

**PATRIOTISM, PRESBYTERIANISM, LIBERTY AND EMPIRE: AN
ALTERNATIVE VIEW OF THE HISTORICAL WRITING OF WILLIAM
ROBERTSON**

by Alexander Sigismund Marais Du Toit

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Ph.D. at Queen
Mary and Westfield College, University of London, September 2000.**



ABSTRACT OF THESIS

This thesis presents an alternative picture of Scottish historian William Robertson (1721-1793). By examining Robertson's works and the contexts in which he wrote, I hope to show that the prevailing view of Robertson as a typically cosmopolitan eighteenth-century 'Enlightenment' figure, a devotee of post-Union 'British' values in historiography and outlook, and a practitioner of the progressive eighteenth-century type of historical writing, called conjectural or stadial history, with its associated values, is misleading. These assumptions have given rise to the belief that Robertson was a wholehearted advocate of European expansion and the British Empire. This picture ignores evidence of Robertson's attachment to older Scottish Presbyterian Whig values such as militant Protestantism (generally seen as abandoned by the Moderate Presbyterian church party which Robertson led), defensive patriotism, martial virtue, and resistance to overbearing authority. These are present in his work and career although they are modified by Robertson's need to appeal to 'polite' English, or 'Enlightened' continental readerships in order to achieve distinction as well as by the Moderate political commitment to support government in return for ecclesiastical autonomy. In many ways, these values are incompatible with those of a cosmopolitan figure influenced by French *philosophes*, or a confirmed advocate of 'British' values supposedly embraced by the Scots intelligentsia. Particularly, the sense of defensiveness inherent in Scottish history makes it practically impossible for a Scot whose outlook remains rooted in the defensive patriotism of the Scottish past to be an unqualified supporter of empire. Robertson's work shows constant dubiety about conquest and empire, thus falling into a tradition of Scottish anti-empire writing as old as European expansion itself which is most noticeable in the work of Scots in whom defensive patriotism is highly developed, such as George Buchanan and Andrew Fletcher. The

Scottish experience of repeated attempted domination by foreign powers seems to cause a corresponding dislike for all such attempts at domination, and sympathy for their victims. The defensive traditions of Presbyterianism appear to add to this, the more so as attacks on Presbyterianism have historically had a strong foreign element. Most evidence for Robertson's position is found in his narrative history. As narrative makes up the greater part of Robertson's work, I believe that he must be considered primarily as a narrative, rather than a conjectural historian, practicing a form of historiography which Scots had been writing long before the eighteenth century. This thesis will illustrate its arguments by examining Robertson's narrative histories in chronological order, as well as correspondence and other contemporary evidence, and parallels will be drawn with earlier Scottish historians where relevant.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

/

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I: Misleading Views	6
1) A Black Cloud: 'Cosmopolitanism' and the 'School of Voltaire'	6
2) 'Scot' or 'Briton'?	16
3) 'Conjectural' and Narrative History	28
CHAPTER II: Inherited Contexts	34
1) Scottish Patriotism	34
2) Presbyterianism	53
3) Whiggery	68
CHAPTER III: Acquired Contexts	88
1) Politics	88
2) 'Politeness' and Literary Prestige	101
CHAPTER IV: Scottish History	108
1) Nobility, Feudalism, Monarchy and Authority	108
2) John Knox, Reformation and Religion	119
3) Mary, Queen of Scots	139
CHAPTER V: European History	155
1) Spain	160
2) Luther, the Reformation and Religion	168
3) Germany	183
CHAPTER VI: America	204
1) Scots and Empire	204
2) Robertson's History : Spanish America	222
3) Robertson's Unfinished History: British America	265
CHAPTER VII: India	293
CONCLUSIONS	317
BIBLIOGRAPHY	325

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The primary acknowledgement from the writer of a thesis must go to the thesis supervisor, in this case Dr Andrew Lincoln of the English department at Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London. It was while attending Dr Lincoln's MA seminar that I became interested in eighteenth-century Scottish historiography, and he patiently and helpfully supervised the production of this thesis over a period of four years; his advice and assistance were invaluable.

My thanks are also due to the staff of various libraries who assisted me with manuscript material, notably the National Library of Scotland, the Edinburgh University Library and the British Library in London. In addition, due to the widely scattered nature of the manuscript sources required for this thesis, I had to approach many other libraries by correspondence, mostly in the UK and the USA, all of whom were extremely helpful and obliging. These are the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; the Bodleian in Oxford; the Historical Society of Pennsylvania; the Hornby Library, Liverpool; the Liverpool Record Office; the Massachusetts Historical Society; New College Library, Edinburgh; the Northamptonshire Record Office; the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York; Princeton University Library; the Sheffield City Archives; University College Library, London; the William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan and the William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, to all of which I am extremely grateful. I am particularly indebted to Mr William R. Erwin of Duke University, who kindly sent me copies of thirteen letters at no charge, a much appreciated act of generosity.

Some of the material in chapter VI of this thesis has been published in Alexander Du Toit, 'Who are the Barbarians? Scottish Views of Conquest and Indians, and William Robertson's History of America', *Scottish Literary Journal*, 26: 1 (June 1999), 29-47.

ABBREVIATIONS

Robertson's Works

- S* *The Works of William Robertson*, 12 vols, (London: Cadell and Davies, 1817), I-III: *The History of Scotland during the Reigns of Queen Mary and of King James VI till his Accession to the Crown of England: with a Review of the Scottish History previous to that Period.*
- C* *The History of the Reign of Charles V, with an Account of the Emperor's Life after his Abdication*, by William H. Prescott, 2 vols, (London: Routledge, 1897). This edition was published as vols VII and VIII of *The Complete Works of William Hickling Prescott*, but I shall refer to them as vols I and II, which they are called on their title pages, not VII and VIII.
- A* *The History of America*, 4 vols, (London: Sharpe and Son, 1820).
- I* *The Works of William Robertson, D.D.*, 12 vols, (London: Cadell and Davies, 1817), XII: *An Historical Disquisition concerning the Knowledge which the Ancients had of India.*
- XA* 'The Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance, and its Connexion with the Success of His Religion, considered; A Sermon preached before the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, January 1759', in *The History of Scotland during the Reigns of Queen Mary and King James VI till his Accession to the Crown of England, with a Review of the Scottish History previous to That Period*, 3 vols, (London: Sharpe and Son, 1820), pp. xciii-cxxvi.
- MWC* *The Works of William Robertson*, 12 vols, ed. by Richard B. Sher and Jeffrey Smitten, (London: Routledge/Thoemmes, 1996), XII: *Miscellaneous Works and Commentaries*, ed. by Jeffrey Smitten. This volume contains hitherto unpublished material written by Robertson.

Robertson's works will be cited by the abbreviation followed by volume number and page. A reference to page 46 of the 2nd volume of *America*, for example, will appear as *A* II: 46. This will be in parentheses in the text, but not if cited among the footnotes. In the text, works will be mentioned in abbreviated form in italics, as *Scotland*, *Charles V*, *America* and *India*. I would have liked to have used the 1996 Thoemmes Robertson throughout, but circumstances prevented this. It's £1000 cost made purchase unfeasible, and it is not available for loan in any library to which I have had ready access. The British Library of course has it, but does not lend books out. Failing to find an easily accessible copy of this edition, I had to use standard nineteenth-century editions of Robertson's works from the London Library which, unfortunately, has no set of Robertson with all the volumes in good enough condition to be loaned. The editors of the 1996 Robertson used the last editions published when Robertson was still alive, so their text will not differ from the ones I have used. Robertson was a minimal reviser in any case, and he certainly could not have made any revisions that would cause differences between the 1996 text and the ones used in this dissertation. The editions which I have used are all mass-produced nineteenth century ones, which are the most readily accessible.

Other Works

- AH* J.B. Black, *The Art of History: A Study of Four Great Historians of the Eighteenth Century*, (London: Methuen, 1926).
- BI* Colin Kidd, *British Identities before Nationalism: Ethnicity and Nationhood in the Atlantic World, 1600-1800*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1999).
- NE* Karen O'Brien, *Narratives of Enlightenment: Cosmopolitan History from Voltaire to Gibbon*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997).
- SSP* Colin Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British Identity, 1689-c.1830*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1993).
- VL* David Allan, *Virtue, Learning and the Scottish Enlightenment: Ideas of Scholarship in Early Modern History*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1993).

Works will be cited by abbreviation followed by page number, e.g. *VL*: 123. These will be in parentheses in the text, but not if mentioned in the footnotes. O'Brien, Kidd and Allan have all produced other works relevant to this thesis, and these will be cited as footnotes in the normal way.

Manuscripts and Libraries

- R-McD* Robertson-MacDonald Papers, National Library of Scotland. The largest single collection of Robertson material anywhere, and so frequently cited.
- BL* British Library, London
- EUL* Edinburgh University Library
- NLS* National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh

Other collections and libraries will be cited in full, e.g. *Minto Papers*, Yale University Library.

Publishers

- CUP* Cambridge University Press
- EUP* Edinburgh University Press
- OUP* Oxford University Press

Other publishers will be named in full, e.g. Yale University Press.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis presents an alternative picture of Scottish historian William Robertson (1721-1793) to that generally accepted. By examining Robertson's works and considering the contexts in which he wrote, I hope to show that the prevailing view of Robertson as a typically 'cosmopolitan' eighteenth-century Enlightenment figure, a devotee of post-Union 'British' values in historiography and outlook, and a practitioner chiefly of the progressive eighteenth-century type of historical writing called 'conjectural' or 'stadial' history is misleading. This picture is sustainable only if attention is confined to certain portions of Robertson's works. It largely ignores Robertson's attachment to older 'Scottish' Presbyterian Whig values such as militant Protestantism (generally seen as abandoned by the Moderate Presbyterian church party which Robertson led), defensive patriotism, independence and resistance to overbearing authority. Such values are strongly espoused in different ways by Scottish writers before Robertson, notably John Knox, and George Buchanan in the sixteenth century, and Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun in the seventeenth and early eighteenth, as well as lesser Scottish writers. These values are strongly present in Robertson's works, although they are modified by Robertson's need to appeal to 'polite' English, or continental readerships in order to achieve distinction, and by the Moderate political commitment to government. In many ways, these values are incompatible with those of a 'cosmopolitan' figure deriving his approach from French *philosophes*, or a confirmed advocate of the 'British' values which were supposedly embraced by the Scots intelligentsia.

Most evidence for Robertson's position is found in the narrative portions of his histories, often treated as less important than the 'conjectural' ones, like the *Progress of Society* introduction to *Charles V*, or those that can be called 'stadial' history, meaning

the more typically Scottish variety of 'conjectural' history in which the development of society is explained by dividing that development into three or four progressive stages, from savagery to commercial civilization. Books IV and VII of *America* are an example of this. However, as narrative makes up the greater part of Robertson's work, I believe that he must be considered primarily as a narrative historian. As such, he practiced a form of historiography which Scots had been writing long before the eighteenth century, and which is more characteristic of Robertson than 'conjectural' or 'stadial' history, arguably eighteenth-century inventions.

My research has been influenced by the work of David Allan, the only writer who has challenged the orthodoxy regarding eighteenth-century Scottish historiography. Allan identifies 'within the broader scholarly community of the eighteenth century, clear indications of continuity with an older tradition of scholarship in Scotland' (*VL*: 175). By this, Allan means traditions of civic humanist and Calvinist writing associated with the work of George Buchanan and John Knox respectively (*VL*: 29-55). To these traditions, I would add another, possibly still older. This is a Scottish variety of defensive, rather than aggressive or 'imperialistic', patriotism, which dates back at least as far as the Scottish struggles for independence in the thirteenth/fourteenth centuries. The Scots are arguably the first people in Europe to develop a sense of 'nation', and this, as William Ferguson notes, is because Scotland was 'periodically subjected to claims for overlordship on behalf of the kings of England'.¹ This powerful sense of defensive patriotism is present in the work of almost all subsequent historians, including Robertson's. It influences Scottish views not only of Scottish, but of all history. Besides Allan's study, little has been done to present an alternative view of eighteenth-century Scottish historiography and particularly of Robertson. Mary Fearnley-Sander has

¹ William Ferguson, *The Identity of the Scottish Nation: An Historic Quest*, (Edinburgh, 1998), p. 175.

identified ‘an allegiance to the Knoxian Reformation’² in Robertson’s work, and her doctoral thesis allows Robertson a greater commitment to the Protestant cause than do most other authorities. Even this thesis, however, presents Robertson as more interested in the Reformation as part of the growth of learning and civilization—Protestantism as enlightenment—than as a politico-religious assault on Popery and absolutism.³ Another unpublished thesis by Pauline Moore comes closest to a different view of Robertson, saying that ‘political and religious prejudices which [...] Robertson held and which formed an integral part of Scottish thought because of earlier historical writings may have contributed to limit the effect which ‘scientific’ detachment might have had’. Because of this, Moore feels that Robertson should be considered less a historian in the style of Voltaire than the inheritor of an older tradition. Unfortunately, Moore’s attention is largely confined to Robertson’s Scottish history. His other works are barely noticed, and when Moore briefly discusses Robertson on empire, she draws misleading conclusions, such that Robertson was a wholehearted supporter of the British government during the American War of Independence.⁴ This was his *official* position. His personal views, however, reflected in his unfinished history of British America, were more complex, and connected to the older ‘Scottish’ traditions which Moore rightly identifies as vital in considering Robertson.

Mention of America serves as an introduction to my last point. Because Robertson is misunderstood as devoted to ‘British’ interests, or as a ‘conjunctural’ or ‘stadial’ historian with an abiding belief in progress, he is sometimes perceived as an

² Mary Fearnley-Sander, ‘Philosophical History and the Scottish Reformation: William Robertson and the Knoxian Tradition’, *Historical Journal*, 33 (1990), 323–338 (p. 336).

³ Mary Fearnley-Sander, *The Emancipation of the Mind: A View of the Reformation in Four Eighteenth-Century Historians*, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Western Australia, 1977), pp. 29, 35, 117, 137.

⁴ Pauline Moore, *The Nature of Theoretical History and its Application in the Works of William Robertson*, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1975), pp. 173, 488, 490.

advocate of empire. One of the increasingly important British—meaning essentially English—concerns of the eighteenth century was, of course, the acquisition and administration of empire, as well as its loss in America. For the ‘stadial’ historian, empire can be seen as an inevitable part of progress. However, I will contend that it is difficult for a Scot whose outlook remains rooted in the defensive patriotism of the Scottish past to be an unqualified supporter of empire. Only by becoming ‘British’ like the London-dwelling poet James Thomson, writer of *Rule, Britannia*, can he become an ‘imperialist’ (to use the modern term). Robertson was never a Thomson. His work shows constant doubt about, and dislike for, conquest and empire. In so doing, it falls into a tradition of Scottish anti-empire writing which is as old as European expansion itself, and which is most noticeable in the work of Scots in whom the sense of defensive patriotism is highly developed. The defensive traditions of Presbyterianism appear to add to this, the more so as all attacks on Presbyterianism have been perceived by Presbyterians as foreign in origin.

The thesis falls into a fairly straightforward shape. Chapter I discusses the three chief assumptions which have led to the prevailing, incomplete picture of Robertson. The next two chapters deal with the conflicting contexts in which Robertson lived and wrote, thus historicizing the historian in order to reach an understanding of the shape of his work. In the case of Robertson, who not only wrote history, but made it, this approach seems particularly helpful. He belonged in a ‘Scottish’ Presbyterian Whig context by inheritance and conviction. At the same time, he was a politician with commitments to government and a writer with a powerful drive towards literary success. Membership in this latter political/literary context meant that his attitude to the older values had to be modified by his political commitments and the demands of a ‘polite’ readership. This is why there is often ambiguity in his work, as ‘Scottish’ concerns are modified by ‘British’ or ‘cosmopolitan’ ones. This is probably also why he

sometimes expresses beliefs in his narrative history (when he writes more in the older, 'Scottish' Protestant Whig tradition) which contradict those found in the conjectural or stadial parts of his work (when he seems to espouse 'cosmopolitan' or 'British' values). The ambiguity explains why the prevailing picture of Robertson can be sustained by concentrating on the 'stadial' or 'conjectural' portions. Chapters IV, V, VI and VII consider Robertson's works in chronological order, and tracing how Robertson's 'Scottish' concerns move from Scotland to European and colonial history. They also examine how these concerns, despite ambiguity and an appearance of balance by 'British' or 'cosmopolitan' attitudes, emerge as the dominant ones in Robertson's work, and how Robertson conveys this.

The terms 'Scottish' and 'British' are placed in quotes when not referring simply to geography. 'Scottish' here refers to a patriotic, Whiggish, Presbyterian outlook, not held by all Scots. 'British', likewise, refers to an ideological position attributed to post-Union Scots, meaning essentially Anglicization. The same rule applies to the terms 'cosmopolitan' and 'enlightened'— they mean a set of values, largely those of Hume and Voltaire, which have been attributed to Robertson and others. These terms are also used in reference to modern authorities who attribute such values to Robertson and eighteenth-century Scotland.

CHAPTER I

Misleading Views

1) A Black Cloud: 'Cosmopolitanism' and the 'School of Voltaire'

A persistent view of Robertson sees him as a typically 'cosmopolitan' figure, the companion of Hume and Gibbon, inspired by Voltaire, Montesquieu and French thought generally. By this standard, Robertson belongs to a republic of letters transcending national boundaries, whose members share similar concerns.

Examination shows, however, that there is more difference than similarity between Robertson on the one hand and Gibbon, Hume and Voltaire on the other. To ignore this is to ignore vital differences in national and religious backgrounds and convictions. In the case of truly 'cosmopolitan' figures like Hume and Gibbon, who could also, like Voltaire, be called deists, sceptics or atheists, lumping together can be acceptable, but Robertson must remain outside the agglomeration. Hume, the other major eighteenth-century Scottish historian, is close to Voltaire in numerous ways, and Robertson is frequently classed with this more conspicuous figure in generalizations about 'cosmopolitanism' and eighteenth-century historiography.

The 'cosmopolitan' view of Robertson can be partly traced, in this century, to J.B. Black's work *The Art of History* (1926). This appeared after a period in which Robertson had almost vanished from notice. Jeffrey Smitten's chronological bibliography of Robertson material confirms this. During Robertson's lifetime, much is written about him and his work, and he continues to attract published attention until the mid-1840s. After this, little is published that even touches on Robertson until the late

1950s, after which there is a slow increase, with a takeoff in the early 1980s.¹ Black's book, a consideration of Voltaire, Hume, Robertson and Gibbon, appeared in the 'desert age'. Black's was the only scholarly consideration of Robertson available for years. In 1985, Richard Sher writes that 'for Robertson's achievement as a historian [...] the standard account remains a dated chapter in J.B. Black'.²

According to Black, 'Hume, Gibbon and Robertson are generally grouped together as "the school of Voltaire in England"' (AH: 77). His use of 'England' when two of the writers mentioned are Scots already shows a blurring of national differences. Although Black acknowledges that the 'school of Voltaire' description is reductive, and that Hume, Robertson and Gibbon 'had their own place in the heaven of historical learning', his reference to Voltaire as 'the greatest of pathfinders' still implies a deal of debt (AH: 77).

Part of the misreading for which Black is responsible comes simply because he considered Robertson together with three more famous writers, prefacing his work with an introduction stating that it is vital to 'understand the ideas that animated Voltaire and his "school"' (AH: 22). Even with 'school' in quotes, an impression of unifying ideas is created. As he sees the chief of these ideas as deism in England and hostility to Christianity in France (AH: 25-28), and as no mention is made of Scotland, the reader is left with the idea of a common indifference or antagonism to Christianity—an attitude that cannot be attributed to an orthodox Presbyterian like Robertson.

When Robertson is discussed, Black shows himself influenced by the 'school' myth. He states that Robertson, writing about religion, is 'limited by the general

¹ Jeffrey Smitten, 'Bibliography of Writings about William Robertson, 1755-1996', in *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire*, ed. by Stewart J. Brown, (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 231-267.

² Richard B. Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh*, (Princeton, 1985), p. 339.

intellectual outlook of his contemporaries' (*AH*: 121), and sees Robertson's attacks on Catholicism as typically 'enlightened' disdain. In fact, Robertson's attitude to these things is Protestant, not 'enlightened'. Hume and Voltaire are as severe about Protestant excesses as about Catholic ones. Robertson as we shall see, is not. Black prefers Robertson's favourable handling of the Reformation to the hostility of Hume's, but he does not see Robertson's view as a result of his Protestantism (*AH*: 122). Indeed, Black ignores Robertson's vocation, apart from calling him 'a parish clergyman' (*AH*: 119). The fact that Robertson was a minister does not, to Black, seem relevant to his work as a historian, and yet it is a major difference between Robertson and Black's other subjects.

While religion issue is the chief problem with the 'school of Voltaire' presentation, others can be found in Black. It is true that Robertson regarded history 'as a corpus of instruction [...] for the benefit of the statesman and the philosopher' but there is no reason to say that this gives Robertson's approach 'a generic resemblance to that of Voltaire, Hume and the philosophical school generally' (*AH*: 128). Historians have always written for didactic reasons. As a minister, Robertson was particularly apt to draw morals from history. Allan points out that Scots had been writing didactic history for several centuries before the eighteenth, in line with Calvinist or civic humanist tradition (*VL*: 57, 63).

Again, Black is correct to say that Robertson saw the sixteenth century as crucial, but incorrect to say that this is because, in that century, 'the power of the crown had asserted itself [...] to the destruction or at all events the repression of a licentious feudalism' (*AH*: 131). This is an early example of a 'cosmopolitan' misunderstanding into which many scholars have fallen—the belief that Robertson, like Voltaire or Hume, regarded monarchical absolutism as preferable to 'licentious' liberty (although such an outlook goes against 'Scottish' Presbyterian Whig thinking). This idea contributes to

two others. One is that Robertson saw the Middle Ages as a period of barbaric anarchy. The other is that he saw history as progress towards the eighteenth century, when all was better than it had ever been. Once more, such views can easily be attributed to Hume and Voltaire, but need qualification with regard to Robertson. Black, in fact, realizes that Robertson sees some good in the Middle Ages. Unfortunately, this view is still based on an 'enlightened' Robertson, who sees in the Middle Ages symptoms of progress to a higher civilization. Black's analysis is based on the untypical *Progress of Society* introduction to *Charles V*, and, inevitably, comparisons are made with Montesquieu (*AH*: 129). In fact, the main portions of Robertson's work reveal an un-'enlightened' support for mediaeval-type 'licentiousness' (especially if combined with Protestantism), directed against would-be absolutists.

Black's book did not renew interest in Robertson. In the 1950s, D.B. Horn cites 'Black's brief essay' as the only scholarly consideration of Robertson.³ The 'school of Voltaire' view therefore remained the dominant one. It is firmly endorsed by Robert Birley, who states that 'Robertson owed much to two great writers, Montesquieu and Voltaire, and he handsomely acknowledged the debt'.⁴ Both parts of this statement need qualification. In conversation, Robertson acknowledged that Voltaire's work 'threw much light upon the subject which he had discussed in his volume preliminary to *Charles V*'. Robertson's debt to Voltaire is therefore limited to what I shall try to show is the most uncharacteristic and unoriginal part of his work, a self-consciously 'cosmopolitan' essay in semi-'conjectural' history. Significantly, Robertson added that 'it was much to be regretted that he [Voltaire] had not cited his authorities'.⁵

³ D.B. Horn, 'Principal William Robertson, D.D., Historian', *University of Edinburgh Journal*, 18 (1955-1957), 155-168 (p. 156).

⁴ Robert Birley, *Sunk Without Trace: Some Forgotten Masterpieces Reconsidered*, (London, 1962), pp. 85-101 (p. 91).

⁵ [William Adam], *Sequel to the Gift of a Grandfather*, ([n.p.], 1839), p. 47

Robertson's disapproval of Voltaire's methods emerges strongly in the notes to the *Progress of Society* itself. Robertson knew that his readers would wonder 'why I have not once mentioned M. de Voltaire, who, in his *Essai sur l'Histoire generale* has [...] treated of all these subjects' (C I: 290). His answer is uncompromising: 'as he seldom imitates the example of modern historians in citing the authors from whom they derived their information, I could not with propriety appeal to his authority in confirmation of any doubtful or unknown fact' (C I: 290). Robertson believes that Voltaire cannot be cited in a serious history. Black notices Robertson's almost modern approach to the writing of history—his use of unpublished sources being a good example (AH: 119). More recently, Denys Hay has called Robertson 'an historian's historian' as against the 'gifted amateur' Hume.⁶ Robertson's professionalism extended to a concern with apparatus which today is indispensable, like indexes and citations. Complimenting Adam Smith on *Wealth of Nations*, he stated that 'I should wish that in the 2d edition you would give a copious index, and likewise what the Book-sellers call *Side-notes*'.⁷ Voltaire's omission was, therefore, for Robertson a serious matter.

It has been suggested that 'school of Montesquieu' better describes eighteenth-century Scottish historians than 'school of Voltaire'.⁸ As Montesquieu contributed to the development of 'conjectural' history and its 'stadial' variant, and as Robertson and other Scots undoubtedly wrote this, the suggestion has merit. The problem in Robertson's case is that too much importance is attached to this type of history, and therefore to whatever influence Montesquieu might have had.

The question of historiography is connected to the larger one of the

⁶ Denys Hay, *Annalists and Historians*, (London, 1977), p. 179.

⁷ Robertson to Adam Smith, 8/4/1776, in *The Correspondence of Adam Smith*, ed. by E.C. Mossner and I S. Ross, (Oxford, 1977), p. 193.

⁸ Denys Hay, 'Muratori and the British Historians', in *Renaissance Essays*, (London, 1988), pp. 85-101 (p. 91).

Enlightenment, which is often seen as a supra-national phenomenon, dominated by France. In the case of the *Scottish* Enlightenment, there has always been a faction which attributes the intellectual efflorescence of eighteenth-century Scotland to outside influence. 'If Montesquieu and Voltaire had been confined to France', asks Lord Dacre, 'could they have inspired Hume and Robertson?' Dacre simply assumes that Scottish writers owe their inspiration to France, which might be true of Hume; the mistake is seeing 'Hume and Robertson' as a homogenous entity. Bracketed with Hume, Robertson is described by Dacre as rejecting Providence's role in history and playing down religion. His most important works, to Dacre, are the *Progress of Society* introduction and the first book of *America*, allowing the attribution of major influence to Montesquieu.⁹

Dacre's view of Scottish historiography is part of a wider belief in a reawakening after a seventeenth century in which Scotland 'was cut off from France by religion and England by politics'.¹⁰ Dacre belongs to the school identified by Christopher Berry (of which the other major member is Nicholas Phillipson), which sees the Union as a break with the past after which everything about Scottish culture is changed.¹¹ Such writers easily fall into 'school of Voltaire' attitudes, because their approach stresses change, not continuity. In the 50s, 60s and 70s, the 'school of Voltaire' faction seemed to hold sway. In Peter Gay's major work on the Enlightenment even the differences noticed by Black have vanished. Voltaire, Hume, Robertson and Gibbon are lumped together as *philosophes*.¹²

⁹ Hugh Trevor-Roper (Lord Dacre), 'The Historical Philosophy of the Enlightenment', *Studies in Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 27 (1963), 1667-1687, (pp. 1667, 1669, 1673).

¹⁰ Hugh Trevor-Roper, (Lord Dacre), 'The Scottish Enlightenment', *Studies in Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 58 (1967), 1635-1658 (p. 1643).

¹¹ Christopher J. Berry, *Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment*, (Edinburgh, 1997), pp. 188-190.

¹² Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, 2 vols, (London, 1969), II: *The Science of Freedom*, pp. 368-396.

Recent scholarship takes account of national differences, but this makes little difference to the subject of Robertson. An important consideration of the Enlightenment as something that varied from country to country is Porter and Teich's *The Enlightenment in National Context* (1981). The article in this that deals with the Scottish Enlightenment is written by Nicholas Phillipson.¹³ Despite considering the Scottish Enlightenment as a Scottish phenomenon, although one that resulted from a break with the past (the Union), Phillipson still falls into 'school of Voltaire' traps when writing about Robertson, especially regarding religion. Although he makes an advance by acknowledging a Providential element in the historian's perception of history, he is still close enough to the 'school of Voltaire' theory to say that Robertson saw Luther as merely 'an ambitious monk'.¹⁴ For Phillipson, 'Robertson's abiding interest in superstition marks him out as an enlightened historian who belongs in the company of Voltaire, Hume and Gibbon'. This repeats the misunderstanding of Robertson's sectarian dislike of Catholicism for a general 'sensibility to the damage that superstition and priestcraft had done to the progress of civilization'. Both the undue concern with 'the progress of civilization' and the 'enlightened' basis for Robertson's attitude to superstition are misleading. Phillipson sees Robertson taking a dim view of 'superstition' in general. However, he also points out that Robertson admires Hinduism, which Robertson describes as 'a vast and complicated system of superstition' (I: 259).¹⁵ As we shall see, it is *Catholic* superstition to which Robertson objects, not superstition in general.

No attempt to consider Robertson's historiography as a whole was made after

¹³ Nicholas Phillipson, 'The Scottish Enlightenment', in *The Enlightenment in National Context*, ed. by Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich, (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 19-40.

¹⁴ Nicholas Phillipson, 'Providence and Progress: An Introduction to the Historical Thought of William Robertson', in *Expansion of Empire*, pp. 53-73, (p. 70).

¹⁵ Phillipson, 'Providence', pp. 68, 72-73.

Black's except for an essay by David Womersley, and Womersley's description of Robertson as 'a would-be *philosphe*' shows the 'school of Voltaire' mentality firmly in place.¹⁶ Then in 1997 appeared Karen O'Brien's *Narratives of Enlightenment*, which eclipses Black completely. However, the sub-title of this work—*Cosmopolitan History from Voltaire to Gibbon*—suggests that the Black cloud lingers. O'Brien's account is far more flexible than Black's. She allows a role to Providence in Robertson's work, acknowledges his patriotism and admiration for Scotland's martial independent past, although inclined to dismiss these as nostalgia,¹⁷ and admits the persistence of Calvinist and civic humanist concerns in his writings (NE: 122-123, 108-109, 125, 149).

However, 'school of Voltaire' ideas are also present. One of O'Brien's sub-headings is 'Unpleasantness of the aristocratic-feudal order' and Robertson is presented as putting forward a 'Voltairean *these royale*' (NE: 110, 111). He is also shown as disapproving of Knox and Luther, and given a genuine belief in a sort of universal Christian tolerance (NE: 126, 144, 146). This last ignores his veiled disdain for episcopacy and the hostility to Catholicism in his work which contrasts so oddly with his public support for governmental Catholic Relief measures.

O'Brien's 'cosmopolitanism' does, however, go beyond a narrowly 'school of Voltaire' interpretation. She sees a definite 'cosmopolitan sensibility [...] across the political certainties, cultural self-understanding and national prejudices which structured contemporary readings of the past' and insists on this despite admitting that her subjects 'differ profoundly in their political priorities' (NE: 1). While this 'cosmopolitan sensibility' often seems to take a 'school of Voltaire' form, O'Brien apparently believes that her subjects take a broader, European view of history, transcending national

¹⁶ D.J. Womersley, 'The Historical Writings of William Robertson', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 47 (1986), 497-505, (p. 505).

¹⁷ See also Karen O'Brien, 'Between Enlightenment and Stadial History: William Robertson on the History of Europe', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 16 (1993), 53-63, (p. 58).

differences. Furthermore, she sees Robertson as ‘the most insistently cosmopolitan of eighteenth-century writers’, who ‘sought to transcend national and denominational prejudices in Britain by drawing attention to common patterns and affinities between British and continental journeys to modernity and empire’ (*NE*: 3). All three of the assumptions most often made about Robertson are here: the ‘cosmopolitanism’ itself, the belief that he supported the submergence of Scotland in ‘Britain’, and the idea that his main concern with history was progress, the view that emphasizes ‘stadial’ history.

At a basic level, there is a problem with giving Robertson a ‘cosmopolitan’ outlook. Voltaire, Gibbon and Hume *were*, literally, cosmopolitan. Hume was intimate with London and happiest in Paris. Gibbon settled in Lausanne. Voltaire was the intimate of a Prussian monarch, who lived much of his life in Switzerland. Their historical projects reflect their cosmopolitanism. Voltaire’s first important history dealt with a Swedish king. Hume started off on what was meant to be a history of ‘Great Britain’, but which ended up a history of England. Gibbon’s historical project was the most cosmopolitan of them all.

There is nothing impossible about being both cosmopolitan in lifestyle and ‘Scottish’ in outlook, of course. George Buchanan and Andrew Fletcher were both familiar with Europe. The ‘cosmopolitanism’ proposed by O’Brien is an attitude, rather than a lifestyle. Unlike Hume, Buchanan and Fletcher retained a strong allegiance to Scotland and a distinctly ‘Scottish’ outlook, noticeable in their brand of civic humanism. In Robertson’s case, however, even the question of a cosmopolitan lifestyle does not arise. He lived all his life in Scotland, never visiting Europe or even England except for brief business trips to London. He was minister of a church which has always been identified with Scotland—Presbyterianism continued to be a component of

Scottish identity until well into the nineteenth century.¹⁸ His life was spent in Kirk politics, and in running a Scottish university. His first major work was a history of his own country, at a time when the subject might not have appealed to a wide readership. 'A History of Scotland', as Robertson's printer William Strahan wrote, 'is no very enticing title'.¹⁹

It is instructive to consider the short-lived *Edinburgh Review* of 1755-1756, to which Robertson contributed. It has been described as 'an avowedly nationalist literary journal'.²⁰ Its intention was 'to give a full account of all books published in Scotland within the compass of half a year, and to take some notice of such books as are published elsewhere as [...] have any title to draw the public attention'.²¹ However, within this patriotic framework, there is a self-conscious air of 'cosmopolitanism' in the various reviews themselves. Robertson appears, in reviewing a history of Peter the Great, to be consciously trying to emulate Voltaire. Like Voltaire, he seems to admire the Russian tyrant for 'civilizing that vast empire'.²² The review is uncharacteristic, as we shall see, in its admiration for an expansionist despot. However, even with such 'cosmopolitan' gestures, the production remained wholly Scottish. The commitment to reviewing all books published in Scotland was faithfully carried out. Books published elsewhere, however, were ignored. Adam Smith, in a letter to the *Review*, deplored this: 'you will find it impossible to support it [the project] with any degree of spirit, while you confine yourselves almost entirely to an account of the books published in Scotland'. Smith draws attention to Europe and the works of Diderot, D'Alembert,

¹⁸ T.C. Smout, 'Perspectives on the Scottish Identity', *Scottish Affairs*, 6 (1994), 101-113, (pp. 105-106).

¹⁹ William Strahan to Robertson, 28/2/1759, in Dugald Stewart, 'Account of the Life and Writings of William Robertson, D D', in *SI*: 1-204, (p. 150).

²⁰ Sher, *Church*, p. 70.

²¹ *The Edinburgh Review*, 2nd edn, (London, 1818), iv. This edition contains both the January-June 1755 and the July 1755-January 1756 issues in one volume.

²² *Edinburgh Review*, 1; Voltaire, *History of Charles XII*, ed. by Winifred Todhunter, (London, 1936), pp. 26-34.

Rousseau and Buffon, urging the *Review* to look across the channel.²³ Smith's advice, however, was not taken. Even a production in which largely artificial Voltairean attitudes are assumed is accused by Smith of parochialism.

The 'cosmopolitan' view of Robertson is certainly tenable, if attention is focussed on certain portions of Robertson's work. I shall try, however, to show that the view is reversible. By this I mean that Robertson did not so much bring a 'cosmopolitan' European eye to bear on British history as focus an unavoidably 'Scottish' one on European and colonial history, viewing it in the light of 'Scottish' Whig Presbyterian prejudices about government, religion and empire.

2) 'Scot' or 'Briton'?

The 'British' view of Robertson shares certain features with the 'cosmopolitan' one. Like the 'cosmopolitan', the 'British' view is part of a broader perception of eighteenth-century Scotland. Devine's recent work insists that eighteenth-century Scots were 'more and more supportive of the idea of Great Britain', points out that James Thomson wrote *Rule, Britannia*, mentions Hume's obsession with 'Scotticisms' and states that 'William Robertson dismissed the Scottish past [...] as a dark story of anarchy, barbarism and religious fanaticism'.²⁴ Thomson had little in common with Robertson, while Robertson differed greatly from Hume, but lumping eighteenth-century Scots together under a 'British' heading is very common. Yet even Devine notices problems. He mentions the patriotic Scottish indignation over the militia issue (in which Robertson was involved), and is forced to conclude that Scottish loyalties survived in

²³ *Edinburgh Review*, pp. 121, 123-135.

²⁴ T.M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000*, (London, 1999), pp. 28, 29.

the eighteenth century, resulting in a 'dual allegiance'.²⁵ This is an allowable view, but whether that allegiance to 'Britain' (especially in Robertson's case) was genuine or a largely pragmatic acceptance of an accomplished political fact (the Union) is a more complicated question. Robertson's adherence to older 'Scottish' values suggests that 'Britishness' did not receive a wholehearted welcome, although there is in Robertson's work, as in that of other contemporary Scots, evidence of tension between 'Scottish' and 'British' values. This tension has been seen as characteristic of much eighteenth-century Scottish literary work. David Daiches calls it 'cultural schizophrenia', defined as 'national pride in the native heritage accompanied by a nervous desire to do the genteel thing'.²⁶ The genteel thing was the 'British' thing, the thing of which the English approved. There is certainly much to be said for this, considering Hume's anxiety about Scotticisms and the tendency of some Scots to call themselves 'North Britons'. The preface to the *Edinburgh Review* (not by Robertson), says that 'North Britain may be considered as in a state of early youth, guided and supported by [...] her kindred country'.²⁷ However, Daiches's suggestion of 'schizophrenia' is a little strong. Most eighteenth-century Scots inclined to one side or the other. It is generally felt that Robertson inclined to the 'British' side.

The eighteenth-century Scottish intelligentsia are often described as abandoning 'Scottishness'. The Moderates have been singled out, as men who 'looked to England'.²⁸ Other writers see the Scottish literati as a whole to blame, and cite 'the attitudes to pre-Union Scottish society expressed by "assimilationist" Scottish intellectuals in the age of Enlightenment' for the general 'inferiorism' from which the

²⁵ Devine, *Scottish Nation*, pp. 28, 30.

²⁶ David Daiches, *The Paradox of Scottish Culture*, (London, 1964), pp. 28, 34.

²⁷ *Edinburgh Review*, p. iii.

²⁸ Andrew L. Drummond and James Bulloch, *The Scottish Church 1688-1843: The Age of the Moderates*, (Edinburgh, 1973), p. 77.

Scottish intelligentsia have been suffering ever since.²⁹ Approaching the matter from another angle, Charles Camic provides an argument about change in early eighteenth-century education which stresses a move away from older values of 'dependency and particularism'. By the first of these he means the place of Providence on Scottish thinking, and by the second a defensive Presbyterian mentality.³⁰ As a representative group, Camic takes Hume, Smith, Robertson, Ferguson and Millar, thus falling into the usual error of judging eighteenth-century Scotland by the 'giants' of the period—his argument is convincing with regards to Hume and Smith, but less so for Robertson and Ferguson.

Nicholas Phillipson stresses the post-Union importation of Addisonian 'politeness' into Scotland. This encouraged 'an image of Scotland—or rather North Britain—as part of a new British polity, exposed to the civilizing powers of commerce, having acquired a culture capable of exploiting it'. This new culture of 'politeness' made possible by the Union, constitutes a break with the old patriotic, civic humanist solutions to Scotland's problems advanced by men like Fletcher of Saltoun.³¹ This appears in a book about Hume, to whom the argument generally applies, and in fact Phillipson rather leans on the 'giants' Hume and Smith in order to sustain his Addisonian thesis.³² Elsewhere, however, Phillipson is seemingly aware of the contradictions involved in applying the 'British' view to all eighteenth-century Scottish thinking, because he describes the champion of Scottish independence, Fletcher, as 'the

²⁹ Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull, *The Eclipse of Scottish Culture*, (Edinburgh, 1989), p. 17.

³⁰ Charles Camic, *Experience and Enlightenment: Socialization for Cultural Change in Scotland*, (Edinburgh, 1963), pp. 44-45.

³¹ Nicholas Phillipson, *Hume*, (London, 1989), pp. 26-29, 31, 32

³² Nicholas Phillipson, 'Politics, Politeness and the Anglicization of Early Eighteenth-Century Scottish Culture', in *Scotland and England, 1286-1815*, ed. by Roger A. Mason, (Edinburgh, 1987), pp. 226-246, (pp. 233-243); 'Adam Smith as Civic Moralist', in *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. by Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff, (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 179-202, (pp. 188-191, 199-201).

ideological father of the Enlightenment'.³³ This is a very good point regarding Robertson and Ferguson, in whose works there is plentiful evidence of the 'Scottish' values associated with Fletcher—martial virtue, defensive patriotism, dislike of absolutism and suspicion of conquest and empire. The values of Fletcher, however, do not agree with a 'British' outlook stressing 'politeness', authority and assimilation. Phillipson himself discusses the militia agitation.³⁴ This was partly an attempt to regain a 'Scottish' martial tradition.

Despite admitting the contradictions in the 'British' position, most authorities still stress 'British' change rather than 'Scottish' continuity. Scottish scholars are generally more inclined to notice these contradictions than others. English ones have been regarding the Union as the start of Scottish civilization since the nineteenth century.³⁵ Lord Dacre's belief that post-Union Scotland was civilized by the abandonment of 'defensive nationalism', is a modern example.³⁶

Linda Colley's influential work takes a different approach, but one which is also somewhat misleading. She sees an eighteenth century Britain in which Scots and English are unified by 'common commitment to Protestantism' strengthened by the experience of war with Catholic France, and increasing dedication to the growing British Empire. English and Scottish Protestants did indeed have, as Colley suggests, a mutual hatred of Catholicism.³⁷ However, they also disliked each other. Presbyterianism and the Church of England, with its bishops and Erastian constitution, are very different forms of Protestantism. Johnson refused to hear Robertson preach, saying that 'I will

³³ Phillipson, 'Scottish Enlightenment', p. 22.

³⁴ Phillipson, 'Scottish Enlightenment', p. 33.

³⁵ Beveridge and Turnbull, pp. 18-19.

³⁶ Trevor-Roper, 'Scottish Enlightenment', pp. 1643, 1656.

³⁷ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, (New Haven and London, 1992), pp 18, 22.

not give sanction, by my presence, to a Presbyterian assembly'.³⁸ Robertson praised the Presbyterian system of church government as one 'by which Lordship and Dominion is excluded from the Church, which is condemned by our Saviour and which is inconsistent with that Liberty wherewith CHRIST hath made us free', effectively stating that Episcopalian government is incompatible with true Christianity.³⁹ Colley's suggestion that Scottish Presbyterians, like the Covenanters, had much in common with English Puritans is partly true, but ignores Presbyterian/Independent conflict about Church government.⁴⁰ Scottish Presbyterians and English Independents were actually at war in the seventeenth century.

The question of how much allegiance eighteenth-century Scots could have to the British Empire is considered in more detail below. Colley herself, however, while pointing out the increasing involvement of eighteenth-century Scots in India and elsewhere, observes that among Scots there was only a 'tiny minority of active imperialists'.⁴¹ It could be plausibly argued that Scots only become really committed to empire in the nineteenth century, when Scots also become more far more wholly 'British'. Tom Nairn states that Scots in this century displayed none of the political nationalism found in other subordinated nations like Italy or Hungary, despite Scotland having all the features necessary for such development.⁴² Marinell Ash notices a similar vacuity about nineteenth-century Scottish attitudes to Scottish history. She sees it declining into romanticism, with an 'increasing emphasis on the emotional trappings of the Scottish past', like Jacobites and Queen Mary.⁴³ More recently, Michael Fry notices

³⁸ Samuel Johnson and James Boswell, *Johnson's Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland and Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, ed. by R. W. Chapman, (Oxford, 1979), p. 236.

³⁹ William Robertson, 'Reasons of Dissent in the Inverkeithing Case', in *MWC*, pp. 25-48 (p. 37).

⁴⁰ Colley, p. 30.

⁴¹ Colley, p. 129.

⁴² Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain*, (London, 1979), pp. 105-107.

⁴³ Marinell Ash, *The Strange Death of Scottish History*, (Edinburgh, 1980), p. 10.

the same slide of Scottish history into irrelevance, largely due to the attitudes of nineteenth-century Scottish Whigs who ‘wanted to make Scotland as much like England as possible’—an accusation which has also been levelled, as I shall shortly discuss at *eighteenth-century Scottish Whigs* by Colin Kidd. The result of this attitude was a wish to ‘close the door on Scotland’s dark and cobwebbed past’, retaining only ‘“picturesque peculiarities” [...] by way of light relief’.⁴⁴

Attempting to explain the disappearance of an effective Scottish identity, discussed by Nairn and Ash, Colin Kidd produced his crucial work on eighteenth-century Scottish Whig historiography, *Subverting Scotland’s Past*. Like Allan’s work, this is based on a reading of Scottish historical texts, but these are used to support a thesis contrary to Allan’s. Kidd insists that from around the mid-eighteenth century, Scottish Whig historians abandoned all the older ‘Scottish’ Whig Presbyterian values in favour of new Anglicized ones, in order to create an ‘Anglo-British institutional identity’ (*SSP*: 97-99). Kidd’s approach to historiography expands to cover eighteenth-century Scotland as a whole; in a later article, he states that ‘the predominant first-order characteristic of North Britishness lay in the adoption of an English political identity’. By this standard, outbreaks of patriotic indignation, like the militia agitation show ‘an enthusiastic identification with English institutions’ with resentment caused by ‘a sense of exclusion from the freedom of Englishmen to bear arms’.⁴⁵ This suggests a major confusion. There can be no doubt that Scots wanted to be *equal* to the English within the Union; such equality was implicit in the whole Union arrangement. This is not the same as wanting to be *like* the English. Tension arose in the eighteenth century, as can be seen by the militia issue, because ‘after 1760, acceptance of the fact of Union was

⁴⁴ Michael Fry, ‘The Whig Interpretation of Scottish History’, in *The Manufacture of Scottish History*, ed. by Ian Donnachie and Christopher Whatley, (Edinburgh, 1992), pp. 72-89, (pp. 80, 83).

⁴⁵ Colin Kidd, ‘North Britishness and the Nature of Eighteenth-Century British Patriotism’, *Historical Journal*, 39 (1996), 361-382, (pp. 363, 381).

tempered by a sense of unfairness with which it was working out for Scotland'.⁴⁶

'Acceptance of the fact' is an important phrase, and describes more closely the attitude of many of Kidd's historians than a wholehearted embrace of 'Britishness'. The men who ran Scotland in the eighteenth century were undoubtedly 'British', meaning Anglicized, Scots. The Earl of Islay (from 1743 the 3rd Duke of Argyll), who 'managed' Scotland in the first half of the eighteenth century, was born in Surrey, educated at Eton, and has been called 'really an English nobleman of Scots extraction' rather than a Scotsman.⁴⁷ Lord Bute was another Eton-educated Scot, the favourite of George III, who found himself in charge of all British affairs in 1761 when Argyll died. Bute 'did not want to be bothered with Scottish affairs' and appointed his equally Anglicized and Etonian brother Stuart Mackenzie as Scottish manager; together, he and Bute 'were members of a generation that wanted to assimilate to British values'.⁴⁸ But if the London-dwelling managers of Scotland were committed to 'Britishness' the people they managed were perhaps less so, and it is from Scots of lower rank, living in Scotland, that attempts to bolster 'Scottishness' typically came.

Kidd appears to confuse Scottish insistence on equality with desire to be *like* the English, which is what Fry says, more convincingly, about *nineteenth-century* Scottish Whigs. Fry sees in eighteenth-century Scottish historians a strong sense of patriotism: Robertson is not 'prepared to swallow English views of Scotland'.⁴⁹ Kidd, however, blames the absence of effective Scottishness in the nineteenth century on the thorough devaluing of the Scottish past by eighteenth-century Whig historians aiming at an

⁴⁶ Janet Adam Smith, 'Some Eighteenth-Century Ideas of Scotland', in *Scotland in the Age of Improvement, Essays in Scottish History in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by N.T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison, 2nd edition, (Edinburgh, 1996), pp. 107-124, (p. 109).

⁴⁷ John Stuart Shaw, *The Management of Scottish Society 1707-1764*, (Edinburgh, 1983), p. 43.

⁴⁸ Alexander Murdoch, *The People Above: Politics and Administration in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, (Edinburgh, 1980), pp. 100, 103.

⁴⁹ Fry, 'Whig Interpretation', p. 76.

Anglicized, 'British' present and future.

Many of Kidd's 'British' contentions resemble 'school of Voltaire' ideas. According to Kidd, eighteenth-century Scottish Whig historians place an 'ideological emphasis on social order and stability', which Kidd sees not as Voltairean but as 'derived in part from the fashionable influence of Addisonian politeness', and 'a rejection of native political culture associated with armed resistance and religious fanaticism' (*SSP*: 115). It is in this light that Kidd considers Robertson. Robertson is shown rejecting the ancient free constitution put forward by George Buchanan, which was the central pillar of Scottish Whiggery, illustrated by Buchanan's Scottish history with its descriptions of tyrants rightfully deposed, so that the tradition of resistance to tyrannical rulers becomes nothing more than aristocratic disorder (*SSP*: 180-184). Kidd sees Robertson as prepared, due to his rejection of the chaotic Scottish past, to accept absolutism, stating that, for Robertson, 'nations had to pass through the valley of the shadow of despotism if they were to attain civil liberty' (*SSP*: 182). That Robertson uses Jacobite sources seems to Kidd to prove that he also adopted Jacobite political views, and took a favourable view of 'the role of a strong and centralized monarchy' (*SSP*: 186). This does not explain why Robertson, unlike Hume, usually disapproves of attempts to establish strong centralized governments, while approving of resistance to them by the very noblemen whom, according to Kidd, he regards as unruly feudal thugs (*SSP*: 182-183).

Kidd's Robertson has little time for Presbyterian tradition either, being classed among writers who gave 'an open acknowledgement of the dysfunctional role of Presbyterianism since the Reformation' (*SSP*: 192). Like, O'Brien, Kidd sees Robertson as being squeamish about Knox, and says that Robertson's account of the Scottish reformer 'shades subtly into iconoclasm' although even he has to admit that no

contemporary Presbyterian objected to Robertson's treatment of the Scottish Reformation.⁵⁰

Kidd's specifying of *Whig* historians as the agents responsible for devaluing the past contributes to another problem, which is the view that Scottish patriotism after 1707, both generally and in historiography, is a Jacobite monopoly. Murray Pittock, who follows Kidd closely, speaks of 'the patriotic history of Episcopal [...] Scots' which was 'consigned to defeat by [...] the end of Jacobite aspirations'.⁵¹ Admittedly, this view is feasible, as can be seen by Kidd's description post-Union Scottish historiography. Kidd states that 'national independence continued to galvanize both whig historians concerned for the Scottish pluralism supposedly guaranteed by the Treaty of 1707, and Jacobite historians keen to repudiate the Union' (*SSP*: 72). The problem is evident; Whig historians, however patriotic, were expressing patriotism within the context of the Union, while Jacobites rejected the Union itself. Whigs supported the Union in 1707, particularly if they were Presbyterian, because, by entrenching the Hanoverian Succession, it prevented the restoration of the Stuarts. Stuart rule was associated in the Whig Presbyterian mind with Catholicism, despotism, enforced Episcopacy and the persecution of Presbyterians. Jacobites, on the other hand, opposed the Union for the same reason. Loyalty to the Stuarts naturally made them oppose the entrenchment of the Hanoverian Succession by the Union. Furthermore, most Jacobites were overwhelmingly Episcopalian. As Pittock points out, 'every Episcopal area was also Jacobite', and Episcopalians naturally opposed the Presbyterianism to which the Union had granted the pre-eminent position in Scotland. Episcopalians linked opposition the Union with their politico-religious views about the

⁵⁰ Colin Kidd, 'The Ideological Significance of Robertson's *History of Scotland*, in *Expansion of Empire*, pp. 122-144, (pp. 138, 141).

⁵¹ Murray G H. Pittock, *Inventing and Resisting Britain: Cultural Identities in Britain and Ireland, 1685-1789*, (Basingstoke, 1997), p. 143.

sacredness of monarchy.⁵² For them, legitimate, indefeasible hereditary monarchy was embodied in the Stuarts, who, of course, had enforced Episcopacy when they ruled Scotland. Jacobites, in rejecting the Union because it excluded the native Scottish dynasty, were far better placed to exploit Scottish patriotism after 1707 than Whigs. Furthermore, as Pittock explains, many Scots supported Jacobitism due to a loyalty to Scotland's independence which took precedence over dynastic loyalty to the Stuarts.⁵³ Despite this, Scottish patriotism and allegiance to the Scottish past cannot be seen as a Jacobite monopoly in the eighteenth century. Presbyterians, after all, only agreed to the Union at the last minute, in November 1706, after the security of Presbyterianism was granted by an Act of Parliament.⁵⁴ It is not unreasonable to suppose that some regretted the necessity, although the Episcopalian and absolutist implications of Jacobitism would obviously have prevented them from aligning with Jacobites against the Union. Pittock's statement that 'Scottish Whig (and by this token overwhelmingly Presbyterian) historiography built itself up through growing identity with English models' is perhaps too much of a generalization.⁵⁵ It might apply to Hume, with his history of 'Great Britain'. It might also fit Scottish Whig historians of a later, more 'British' generation than Robertson's. John Millar (1735-1801) chose to write a 'Historical View' of English government, in which he apparently felt the need to apologize for and explain what the English see as Scottish faults, the 'shrewdness, cunning and selfishness imputed to the people of Scotland'.⁵⁶ This apologetic approach

⁵² Murray G.H. Pittock, *The Myth of the Jacobite Clans*, (Edinburgh, 1995), pp. 47, 98-100.

⁵³ Pittock, *Myth*, pp. 93-94.

⁵⁴ Colin Kidd, 'Religious Realignment between the Restoration and Union', in *A Union for Empire: Political Thought and the British Union of 1707*, ed. by John Robertson, (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 145-170 (p. 166).

⁵⁵ Pittock, *Inventing*, p. 141.

⁵⁶ John Millar, *An Historical View of the English Government, from the Settlement of the Saxons to the Revolution in 1688*, 4 vols, (London, 1812), III, pp. 94-96.

is not found in Robertson's *Scotland*. As I shall show, Robertson is far from dismissive of the Scottish past, his attitude to the Union is ambivalent, and his treatment of Mary Queen of Scots suggests a sympathy with the patriotic aspect of Jacobitism, without endorsement of its religious and absolutist associations.

One aspect of the 'British' Robertson on which Kidd does not touch is that of the advocate of empire. O'Brien sees in Robertson's work 'a cosmopolitan appreciation of Empire as a [...] beneficial international system' (*NE*: 20). Besides this 'cosmopolitan' view, there is also a specifically 'British' one. The chief advocate of this view is Jeffrey Smitten, who states that Robertson 'celebrated the establishment of the British Empire'.⁵⁷ Smitten bases this on Robertson's address to the King as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1763. In this, he welcomes the Peace of Paris, ending the Seven Years War. This address celebrates the fact that 'your Majesty hath gained Acquisitions of vast Extent'.⁵⁸ However, Smitten admits that such addresses were 'the work of a committee'.⁵⁹ Furthermore, as Moderator, Robertson was wearing his official hat, and bound by the Moderate compromise to support government. He probably felt genuinely glad about the peace. Robertson may also, as Sher suggests have been acknowledging a debt to Lord Bute, whose work the peace was, and through whose influence Robertson had received great advancement in the early 1760's.⁶⁰ There is even a Scottish patriotic explanation. The peace was unpopular with a large section of the English public, because it *renounced* some territory conquered during the war. These discontented Englishmen had a mouthpiece in John Wilkes, who attacked the peace, and Bute for making it. Bute's Scottishness caused Wilkes to employ English

⁵⁷ Jeffrey Smitten, 'William Robertson', in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, 2nd series, CIV: *British Prose Writers 1660-1800*, ed. by Donald Siebert, (Detroit and London, 1991), pp. 260-268, (p. 266).

⁵⁸ William Robertson, 'General Assembly Addresses', in *MWC*, pp. 115-121, (p. 116).

⁵⁹ Jeffrey Smitten, 'Introduction to Robertson's Miscellaneous Works', in *MWC*, pp. ix-lv, (p. xxxi).

⁶⁰ Richard B. Sher, 'Charles V and the Book Trade: An Episode in Enlightenment Print Culture', in *Expansion of Empire*, pp. 164-195, (p. 175).

Scotophobia in his campaign. Robertson may, therefore, have been showing Scottish solidarity in supporting the peace.

A useful contrast to this apparent ‘imperial’ enthusiasm is presented in the same context—an address to the monarch—in the dedication of *Charles V* to George III in 1769. Here Robertson speaks in the solemn role of the historian whose part is to instruct even rulers. This is very much in the Buchananite humanist tradition. Buchanan, dedicating his political treatise to James VI, states that the work contains instruction essential to ‘one who occupies a pre-eminent place in human affairs’.⁶¹ Robertson assumes a similar position: ‘History claims it as her prerogative to offer instruction to kings’ (C I: vii). The instruction that Robertson offers is plain: he contrasts ‘the various calamities which that monarch’s [Charles V’s] ambition to be distinguished as a conqueror brought upon his own dominions’ with the behaviour of George III who ‘possessed such self-command [...] as to set bounds to his own triumphs, and prefer the blessings of peace to the splendour of military glory’ (C I: vii). Robertson believed in military action, as his histories make clear, but only when used defensively. The dedication to George III is complimentary, but it expresses views contrary to those of the General Assembly Address. It probably presents Robertson’s true feelings, because the restraining factors that operated on the 1763 address are absent in 1769. Robertson is not speaking in an official capacity, and his debt to Bute, which he never repaid in anything except words, is perhaps no longer relevant six or seven years after he had assisted Robertson to advancement.

The problem with seeing an ‘imperialist’ Robertson is that this view ignores centuries of ‘Scottish’ suspicion of conquest and empire, a natural reaction from

⁶¹ George Buchanan, *The Powers of the Crown in Scotland*, ed. and trans. by Charles Flinn Arrowood, (Austin, 1949), p. 38.

historical experience. An examination of Robertson's *narrative* history of America shows that he is very much in this tradition, and that his view of empire is largely hostile. However, Robertson's narrative history is generally sidelined in favour of the small amount of 'conjectural' or 'stadial' history he wrote and this contributes to the misleading picture. The view that sees Robertson as primarily concerned with progress and the development of society, as shown by his 'conjectural' and 'stadial' history, is as much responsible for the idea of a pro-empire Robertson as the 'British' one.

3) 'Conjectural' and Narrative History

Some qualification must be made about the term 'conjectural' in connection with Robertson. The *Progress of Society* introduction to *Charles V*, for example, is not wholly 'conjectural' as Rousseau's Discourses are. Neither is it, like Voltaire's *Essai*, a collection of sweeping, unsupported assertions. Ronald Meek has observed that Scottish 'conjectural' history based itself 'on the study of concrete historical facts'.⁶² In Robertson's case, facts are backed up by copious notes. Nonetheless, the *Progress*, a general survey of a long period, is closer to being 'conjectural' than the bulk of Robertson's work, which is detailed political narrative. That part which can be called 'stadial' history, meaning that it exemplifies the theory, generally associated with eighteenth-century Scottish thought, of societal development through progressive stages, is still less. As Karen O'Brien points out, Robertson only 'fully absorbed stadial historical methodology in the *History of America* [...] he found the stadial conception of social evolution intractable to straightforward narrative employment'.⁶³ Most of what Robertson wrote was straightforward narrative, so the logical conclusion is that he

⁶² Ronald L. Meek, 'The Scottish Contribution to Marxist Sociology', in *Economics and Ideology and Other Essays: Studies in the Development of Economic Thought*, (London, 1967), pp. 34-50, (p. 38).

⁶³ O'Brien, 'Enlightenment and Stadial History', p. 55.

found this type of history important. Nonetheless, the prevailing attitude sees Robertson's narrative history as of secondary importance. The reason for this attitude, and its pervasiveness, is easily discernible. Robertson, in the 'conjectural' or 'stadial' sections, often expresses beliefs which appear to support the 'cosmopolitan' or 'British' interpretations of him. However, these beliefs, as we shall see, often contradict those found in the narrative portions of Robertson's writings, in which Robertson seems to return to an older 'Scottish' outlook.

It is by concentrating on sections like the *Progress* that a convincing picture of an 'enlightened' eighteenth-century Robertson can be constructed. Anyone who wishes to hitch Robertson to the *philosophe* wagon has to appeal to the 'conjectural' parts of his work. Writing about the reception of Robertson's work in France, Daniel Gordon assumes that eighteenth-century Scots writers were in the same position of political powerlessness as the people of absolutist France. Because it had lost its Parliament in 1707, Scotland is presented as depoliticized, with the result that eighteenth-century Scottish writers were left wondering 'how to construe a domain of ethically significant exchange outside of the political sphere, and how to depoliticize virtue so that life without sovereignty could have meaning'.⁶⁴ In trying to show eighteenth-century Scots as similar to their French contemporaries, Gordon ignores the importance of the General Assembly and events like the militia issue. Scots in Robertson's position had opportunities for political action which Frenchmen did not.

In establishing similarities between Scottish and French thought, Gordon describes a depoliticized Robertson who, like his French peers, took a major interest in society, progress, manners and refinement, rather than politics. This view cannot be sustained in relation to most of Robertson's work, which is detailed political history.

⁶⁴ Daniel Gordon, *Citizens Without Sovereignty: Equality and Sociability in French Thought 1670-1789*, (Princeton, 1961), pp. 136-137.

Gordon's evidence is taken from the *Progress*, and specifically from Book I, which is a general history of society from the Dark Ages to the sixteenth century. By reading selectively, Gordon can create a Robertson who 'took the spotlight off the distinctive laws and customs of European nations and placed it on the emergence of 'refinement' as a feature of Europe as a whole'.⁶⁵ This is not even true of the *Progress* as a whole; Book III specifically traces the development of 'distinctive laws and customs' in each of the major European countries.

Robertson's own view of the importance of the *Progress* is illuminating, and suggests that it was not central to his work. He was certainly aware that it was the part of *Charles V* which most appealed to a French readership. Writing to his French translator, Jean-Baptiste Suard, Robertson notes that 'I always thought that the researches and enquiries in the first volume were better suited to the French taste'.⁶⁶ John Renwick points out that it was only with *Charles V* that Robertson 'demonstrated in a variety of ways that he had close affinities with the *Philosophes*'.⁶⁷ Renwick also observes, however, that these 'affinities' are superficial, and that Hume, not Robertson, was the Scot with whom Voltaire really identified.⁶⁸ This poses the question of how real Robertson's French affinities were, and consequently how committed he was to the 'conjectural' history in which those affinities are expressed. The *Progress* does not seem to have formed part of Robertson's original plan for *Charles V*. In a letter to Walpole in 1759, explaining his new project, Robertson gives details of what he sees are the important features; there is no mention of any general history of manners and

⁶⁵ Gordon, pp. 150-160, 152.

⁶⁶ Robertson to Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Suard, no date, 'Original Letters of David Hume and Dr Robertson', *New Monthly Magazine*, 12 (Jan-June 1820), 5-12, (p. 8).

⁶⁷ John Renwick, 'The Reception of William Robertson's Historical Writings in Eighteenth-Century France' in *Expansion of Empire*, pp. 145-163, (p. 158).

⁶⁸ Renwick, pp. 160, 162.

society.⁶⁹ Robertson began the *Progress* only in 1765: 'The Historical part of the work is finished, and I am busy with a preliminary book [...] a view of the progress of the society, laws, manners and arts from the irruption of the barbarous nations to the beginning of the sixteenth century'.⁷⁰ It seems that, to Robertson, the *Progress* was not the crucial part of the work, but an afterthought. There is a possible explanation as to why he added it. As I shall discuss below, a complete understanding of Robertson requires an awareness of his avid pursuit of literary prestige. This made him acutely conscious about what was wanted by the readership to which he needed to appeal. It is possible that he added the *Progress* with the conscious intention of winning the approval of those figures who could bring him European prestige. This hypothesis would seem to be supported by the fact that there is nothing original about the *Progress*; Robertson was accused in his own lifetime of plagiarising it from Smith's lectures.⁷¹

Part of the responsibility for the over-emphasis on Scottish 'conjectural' history is attributable to sociologists and economists. Andrew Skinner believes that Scottish 'conjectural' history represents a 'remarkable anticipation of Marx'.⁷² Ronald Meek agrees, stating that 'Marx can properly be said to be the heir of the basic ideas of the Scottish historical school'. This theory can only be supported by focussing exclusively on Scottish 'conjectural' history, which does somewhat resemble the Marxist approach. Meek's main interest is in Smith and Millar, but Robertson is also given a place. This is largely due to a quotation from the 'stadial' Book IV of *America*: 'In every enquiry concerning the operations of men when united together in society, the first object of

⁶⁹ Robertson to Horace Walpole, 4/2/1759, in *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 48 vols, ed by W S. Lewis et al., (Oxford and New Haven, 1937-1983), XV, pp. 45-46.

⁷⁰ Robertson to Thomas Birch, 1765, *Birch Papers*, Add. MS 4317, f. 232, BL.

⁷¹ Ian Simpson Ross, *The Life of Adam Smith*, (Oxford, 1995), p. 105.

⁷² A.S. Skinner, 'Economics and History: The Scottish Enlightenment', *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 12 (1965), 1-22, (p. 21).

attention should be their mode of subsistence' (*A II*: 108-109). Meek finds this significantly similar to the approach of Marx.⁷³ An earlier authority, Roy Pascal, also seizes on this 'mode of subsistence' quotation as definitive. For him, the significant parts of Robertson's output are 'the introductions to the works on America and Charles V, and in the general approach to his history of Scotland'.⁷⁴ Thirty years later, Meek similarly singles out these features of Robertson's work.⁷⁵

The impression given by this consideration of Robertson and Scottish eighteenth-century historians generally, is that they saw 'modes of subsistence' as the defining feature of history. In Robertson's case, it is obvious that 'modes of subsistence' are irrelevant to most of his work, which is political narrative. Robertson's statement about these 'modes' is plainly only meant to be applicable to 'conjectural' history, which is the context in which he makes the remark. Only if one takes the view that this type of history is the most important produced by eighteenth-century Scottish historians can the central importance of the 'modes' be accepted. A case of this sort might be made for Smith or Millar, but not for Robertson, and it is misleading to include him in a 'school' defined by 'conjectural' history.

David Allan identifies an important misapprehension created by the undue attention given to Scottish 'conjectural' history and 'modes of subsistence'. Such concentration creates the belief 'that materialism underlay the concerns of [...] those historians—Ferguson, Smith and Robertson among them—who evolved the so-called 'stadial theory' of historical progress'. The 'conjectural' sections of Robertson's work are certainly those least likely to contain what Allan calls the 'traditional religious

⁷³ Meek, 'Scottish Contribution', pp. 31, 50.

⁷⁴ Roy Pascal, 'Property and Society: The Scottish Historical School of the Eighteenth Century', *Modern Quarterly*, 1 (1938), 167-179, (pp. 170, 177).

⁷⁵ Meek, 'Scottish Contribution', pp. 29-30.

priorities' of Scottish thought.⁷⁶ Such a 'materialist' view also ignores that fact that, for moralists like Robertson, concepts like 'barbarism' and 'savagery' were moral conditions, not inevitably connected to material advancement. All in all, as Allan points out, excessive concentration on 'conjectural' history only strengthens the misunderstanding of eighteenth-century Scottish thought as largely secular.⁷⁷

A further consequence of the attention given to Robertson's 'conjectural' history is that it strengthens the view of Robertson as a supporter of empire. This is particularly noticeable in the approach usually taken to *America*. If Robertson's views of non-European peoples are judged solely by the 'stadial' sections of that work and they are, by almost all authorities—then the only possible conclusion is the one reached by Meek: that to Robertson, peoples like Amerindians 'appeared much more as ignoble than noble savages'. This conclusion comes at the end of a consideration of Book IV of *America*, in a work which traces the development of the four-stage 'stadial' theory. 'Stadial' history is meant to explain progress, and the very nature of progress demands that the earlier stages be inferior to the latter. But to see Robertson as a doctrinaire believer in material progress as the standard by which societies must be judged is to ignore moral and political issues completely. Meek, in fact, seems to realize that there are difficulties with such a view when he concedes that Robertson 'was by no means an unwavering apostle of the doctrine of progress'.⁷⁸ This was written in 1976, and authorities have become *more* rigid on the point since the 70's. As I shall discuss, most modern authorities, basing themselves on Robertson's 'stadial' history, take a far less flexible view than Meek's.

⁷⁶ David Allan, 'Protestantism, Presbyterianism and National Identity in Eighteenth-Century Scottish History', in *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland c.1650-c. 1850*, ed. by Tony Claydon and Ian McBride, (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 182-205, (p. 185).

⁷⁷ Allan, 'Protestantism', p. 185.

⁷⁸ Ronald L. Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage*, (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 136-145, 143.

CHAPTER II

Inherited Contexts

1) Scottish Patriotism

The Scottish view of history is conditioned by a tradition of defensive independence, because a nation's experience of history affects its historical perception. Scottish history is marked by threat of foreign domination. Defensive patriotism is central to Scottish national mythology. 'Mythology' here does not mean fantastic stories, but what Ricoeur calls 'the values peculiar to a nation and which constitute it as a nation'.¹ Such values, rooted in history, are features of the national past which a nation regards as crucial.

Much crude 'mythology' was used to support assertions of independence, like the line of Scottish kings stretching back to 330 BC. Robertson rejects this part of the tradition as based upon 'uncertain legends', and criticizes historians like John of Fordun, Hector Boece and George Buchanan who perpetuated it (*SI*: 208, 209-210). This is seen by Kidd as evidence of the devaluing of the past by eighteenth-century Whig historians (*SSP*: 117-119), and by William Ferguson as a contemptuous 'Enlightened view of the Dark Ages and indeed of the Middle Ages as well'.² While this view can be attributed to Hume, it is less applicable to Robertson. His 'rejection' of the Middle Ages is not grounded in 'enlightened' contempt, but in lack of evidence, and his explanation for this lack is patriotic. It is the result of 'the malicious policy of Edward I of England':

In order to establish his claim, he seized the public archives, he ransacked churches and monasteries, and getting possession, by force or fraud, of many historical monuments, which tended to prove the antiquity or freedom of the kingdom, he carried some of them into England and commanded the rest to be burned (*SI*: 210).

¹ Paul Ricoeur, *History and Truth*, ed. and trans. by Charles A. Kelbley, (Evanston, 1965), pp. 278-279.

² William Ferguson, *Identity*, p. 207.

Robertson asserts Scottish independence and blames Edward for the destruction of Scottish history. This is very different from the 'enlightened' attitude of Hume: 'The Scots pretend that he [Edward I] also destroyed all the annals preserved in their convents: But it is not probable that a nation, so rude and unpolished, should be possessed of any history'.³

Scottish defensive patriotism was strengthened by mediaeval conflicts with England, initiated by Edward I's claim to authority over Scotland. These gave rise to that totemic document of Scottish patriotism, the Declaration of Arbroath of 1320, which defiantly asserts that 'we shall never under any conditions submit to the domination of the English'.⁴ From this time on, Scottish writers repeatedly and vehemently assert independence. In the fourteenth century, John of Fordun makes Prince Gaythelos (the mythical Greek founder of the Scottish royal line) say that 'it is the highest nobleness of man [...] to endure the sway of no foreign ruler'. Fordun also disputes suggestions in the writings of Geoffrey of Monmouth and others that the northern part of Britain was ever subject to the south.⁵ In the sixteenth century, Hector Boece puts patriotic speech into the mouth of Robert Bruce (the hero-king's grandfather). When Edward I offers him the crown of Scotland on condition that he holds it as Edward's vassal: Bruce 'ansuerit that he wald nocht randyr his native cuntre, sen it has bene fre to his dayis, to seruitude of Englishmen'.⁶ This is echoed by George Buchanan, who makes Bruce say 'That he was not so eager of a Crown, as to accept of it, by abridging the liberty his ancestors had left him'. Buchanan, discussing the claim

³ Hume, *The History of England from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688*, ed. by William B. Todd, 6 vols, (Indianapolis, 1983), II, p. 113.

⁴ Lord Cooper of Culross, 'The Declaration of Arbroath in English', in *The Wisdom of the Scots*, ed. by Moray McLaren, (London, 1961), pp. 53-56, (p. 55).

⁵ John of Fordun, *Chronicle of the Scottish Nation*, ed. by William F. Skene, trans. by Felix J.H. Skene, (Edinburgh, 1872), pp. 14, 19-20, 30-36.

⁶ Hector Boece, *The Chronicles of Scotland, translated into Scots by John Bellenden*, ed. by R.W. Chambers et al., 2 vols, (Edinburgh and London, 1938-1941), II, p. 248.

of Edward I to superiority over Scotland, states that 'the English had nothing to defend their Claim, but old Fables', which plainly refers to Galfridian 'evidence'. Like Robertson, he criticizes Edward's destruction of Scottish records in order to obliterate memories of independence. He is also severe on 'English Writers', who assert that the Saxon kings of England exercised authority over other parts of Britain.⁷ Patriotism is also found in Buchanan's political treatise, the *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*: 'for two thousand years now, we have held it [i.e., Scotland] free from the domination of foreigners'.⁸ The tradition of asserting Scotland's independence since time immemorial is continued by the Presbyterian historian David Hume of Godscroft in the late sixteenth/early seventeenth centuries. He too, criticizes Edward's destruction of 'such thinges as might stire vp in the hartes of true subjects a generous desire to the recoverie of ther former libertie'. Notions of English superiority are 'impudent alleagances objected by some ather merelie ignorant, or maliciouslie inclyned against the [...] freedome of the Scottish Kings, and Nation'. Scotland has never been conquered: 'Danes, Pights, Bretons, and English-Saxons, proving to their losse, the force of their [i.e., the Scots'] valour, hes bein glaid by tymes [...] to accept the vnequal conditions of a desyred peace'.⁹ The mid-seventeenth century Covenanting writer Samuel Rutherford, in his political treatise *Lex, Rex*, also invokes historical patriotism: 'When Malcolm IV [...] would have admitted a treaty to the hurt of the kingdom, the nobles said [that] the king had no right to take anything from the kingdom'.¹⁰ As a Covenanter, Rutherford's main point is that Scottish kings were not absolute, but the resistance of the nobles to the king in the case of Malcolm IV is motivated by patriotic concern. Andrew Fletcher

⁷ George Buchanan, *History of Scotland*, 2 vols, 4th edition, (Edinburgh 1751-1752), I, pp. 50, 219, 304, 315, 332.

⁸ Buchanan, *Powers*, p. 148.

⁹ David Hume of Godscroft, *History of the House of Douglas*, ed. by David Reid, 2 vols, (Edinburgh, 1996), I, pp. 62, 64-65, 65.

¹⁰ Samuel Rutherford, *Lex, Rex, or the Law and the Prince*, (Edinburgh, 1843), p. 226.

of Saltoun is famous for his patriotism, so it is unsurprising to find him disputing English assertions. When an English interlocutor states that 'Twas [...] inseperable from the fortune of our Edwards to triumph over your nation', Fletcher responds jeeringly, 'Do you mean Edward of Carnarvan [...] and his victory at Bannockburn'? ¹¹ Down the years, defensive patriotism runs through Scottish writing.

Martial independence in the inhabitants of Scotland has a classical pedigree in Tacitus's *Agricola*, with its description of the Caledonian Calgacus's speech attacking Roman imperialism: 'they create a desolation and call it peace'. ¹² Tacitus's Calgacus, as Allan shows, was crucial to Scottish historians as 'an ancient Scottish example of heroism' (*VL*: 194). Boece turns Tacitus's Caledonian chief into the Scottish king Galdus, and gives him a stirring speech. ¹³ Buchanan points out that King Corbred II, known as Galdus, has been identified with Tacitus's Calgacus. ¹⁴ Hume of Godscroft states that 'Romane Legions' have been resisted by the inhabitants of Scotland, 'as their own histories doe witnese'. ¹⁵ This is an obvious allusion to Tacitus. As I shall discuss, Tacitus is important in considering Robertson's historiography. Robertson's own account of Roman attempts on Scotland follows that of earlier Scottish writers in its obvious allusion to Tacitus's writing: 'the Romans, under Agricola' found Scotland 'possessed by the Caledonians, a strong and warlike people', whom they 'repulsed rather than conquered' (*SI*: 208). Again, Robertson's view differs from Hume's, which describes Scotland as 'defended by barren mountains and by the contempt which the

¹¹ Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, 'An Account of a Conversation Concerning a Right Regulation of Governments for the common Good of Mankind. In a Letter to the Marquiss of Montrose, the Earls of Rothes, Roxburg and Haddington, from London the first of December 1703', in *Political Works*, ed. by John Robertson, (Cambridge, 1997), pp 175-215, (pp. 198, 203-204).

¹² Tacitus, *The Agricola and the Germania*, ed. and trans. by H. Mattingly and S.A. Handford, (London: Penguin, 1970), p. 81.

¹³ Boece, *Chronicles*, I, pp. 169-170.

¹⁴ Buchanan, *History*, I, p. 132.

¹⁵ Hume of Godscroft, *House of Douglas*, I, p. 65.

Romans entertained for it'.¹⁶ By attributing Caledonian independence to barrenness and poverty, Hume devalues Caledonian martial courage.

The odd thing about this tradition of defensive patriotism is that, while those who asserted ancient Scottish independence were lowlanders or 'lowlandized' Gaels, the tradition has its origins in the Gaelic history of the Scots of Dalriada. This is what writers like Fordun, Boece and Buchanan describe, as the history of all Scotland, in their accounts of ancient history. Kidd discusses this anomaly, pointing out that Scottish patriotic and political needs required a continued allegiance to this essentially Gaelic tradition of ancient historical independence and free institutions, while those who maintained it were becoming increasingly hostile to Gaelic Highlanders (*BI*: 123-145). He goes on to say that this tradition was abandoned by Scottish historical literati after the middle of the eighteenth century, and replaced by a preoccupation with 'Gothicism', an interest in the Germanic institutions that went into Scotland's historical make-up (*BI*: 230-233, 279-284). As 'Gothic' institutions are common to both English and European history, this view strengthens Kidd's general belief that the mid-eighteenth-century saw a break with the 'Scottish' past among the literati. Scots like Robertson, says Kidd, worked to 'dislodge chauvinistic values' and to show that 'North Britain was a province not only of Britain, but of the wider republics of European letters and Gothic freedoms' (*BI*: 232). Taking such a position, Kidd can also state that 'the substitution of an enlightened Gothicism for a discredited Gaelic historical mythology assisted Anglo-Scottish integration' because English historical views also stressed 'Gothicism' (*BI*: 251). There are, however, problems with attributing this position to Robertson. It is significant that Kidd does not cite *Scotland* to support his argument, but the uncharacteristic *Progress of Society*. This enables him to put Robertson in the same

¹⁶ Hume, *History*, I, p. 10.

class as Smith and Millar, to whom his arguments have real application (*BI*: 231-232). As Kidd points out, 'the rationale behind the Dalriadic identity was not primarily ethnic' (*BI*: 141). While drawing on essentially Gaelic history to sustain patriotism and identity, lowland Scots did not identify themselves with Gaels. Although Kidd is here referring to Scots before the mid-eighteenth-century, this unconsciousness of the anomalous Scottish position seems to exist in Robertson as well. Hume apparently tries to resolve the anomaly, stating that 'the lowlands were peopled by a race of men [...] of Saxon origin' while 'The hills were possessed by the ancient inhabitants, of Celtic extraction'.¹⁷ Robertson acknowledges no Germanic influence. Scotland was inhabited by Picts and Scots, and the Scots 'were probably a colony of the Celtae or Gauls' who, 'if we may believe the common accounts, settled first in Ireland, and [...] landed at last on the coast opposite to that island, and fixed their habitations there' (*SI*: 209). Robertson accepts the traditional account of Scots coming from Ireland, if only because nothing else feasible presents itself, and there is no differentiation between Celtic highlanders and Germanic lowlanders. This is not because Robertson identified himself with Gaeldom but because the question does not seem to have occurred to him in a remote historical context. If he was not aware of the anomaly of the 'Scottish' historical tradition, it is difficult to see how he could have abandoned it in favour of a 'Gothic' one suitable to 'British' assimilation.

Robertson also discusses 'the famous controversy concerning the independence of Scotland' about whether Scotland is England's vassal, and describes Scottish resistance to English attempts to enforce this claim (*SI*: 213, 213-220). Robertson repeats arguments about the 'fabulous tales of the early British history' used to back the English claim (*SI*: 220). The claim is also based on 'the partial testimony of ignorant

¹⁷ David Hume, *History of Great Britain*, ed. by Duncan Forbes, (London, 1970), p. 141

Chroniclers'; in short, the whole claim is 'ill-founded' (S I: 220). So is another English assumption: 'the homage done by the Scottish monarchs for their lands in England is preposterously supposed to imply the subjection of their whole kingdom' (S I: 220).

It could be argued that Robertson's patriotism is not incompatible with 'Britishness'. Assertions of Scottish independence can be found in writers like John Major (1521) and Thomas Craig (1605) who were in favour of a union.¹⁸ However, although Robertson's patriotic assertions and arguments are common to both unionists and anti-unionists in the canon of Scottish historiography and political thought, the Scot whom he actually *cites* for the debate about Scotland's status is his great-uncle James Anderson, a Presbyterian Whig active in early eighteenth-century controversy. In 1703, Anderson wrote a reply to William Atwood, an Englishman who wished to establish that Scotland was bound by the 1701 Act of Settlement. To do this, he revived English arguments about Scotland's status. Anderson restated Scottish counter-arguments, in order to assert that the Scottish crown was 'imperial', meaning subject to no other crown. He backed his arguments with a study of charters (unlike Atwood, who relied on Galfridian balderdash, 'stories of Brutus and King Arthur'¹⁹), a method which, as William Ferguson says, 'represents a completely new approach to Scottish history'. This plainly influenced Robertson, who 'unlike David Hume, consulted manuscript sources and had the habit of adding illustrative documents in appendices in the manner of his grand-uncle'.²⁰ Robertson's correspondence suggests that he was sufficiently interested to make genealogical enquiries into the Anderson connection.²¹

¹⁸ John Major, *A History of Greater Britain*, ed. by Aeneas J.G. Mackay, trans. by Archibald Constable, (Edinburgh, 1892), pp. 42-43, 215-218; Thomas Craig of Riccarton, *De Unione Regnorum Britanniae Tractatus*, (ed. and trans. by C. Sanford Terry, (Edinburgh, 1909), pp.

¹⁹ James Anderson, 'An Historical Essay, Shewing that the Crown and Kingdom of Scotland is Imperial and Independent', ed. by William Ferguson, in *Stair Society Miscellany III*, ed. by W.M. Gordon, (Edinburgh, 1992), pp. 1-130, (p. 32).

²⁰ William Ferguson, 'Introduction' in Anderson, 'Essay', pp. 1-26 (pp. 9, 25).

²¹ John Anderson to Robertson, 27/5/1791, *R-McD*, MS 3944, f. 44, NLS.

There is something anomalous about a wholly 'British' Robertson repeating arguments about Scottish independence. Allan sees in Robertson's Scottish history 'a rhetorical strategy which brought the literati closer [...] to the positions adopted at the turn of the eighteenth century by such historians as James Anderson'. Paradoxically, even Allan states that eighteenth-century Scottish writers 'insisted on the unequivocal benefits of the Union'.²² If the Union is unequivocally beneficial, why does Robertson insist on ancient independence? The answer concerns the nature of the Union itself:

If the one crown had been considered not as imperial and independent, but as feudatory to the other, a treaty of union could not have been concluded on equal terms and every advantage which the dependent kingdom procured must have been deemed the concession of a sovereign to a vassal (*SI*: 213).

It could again be argued that unionist writers like Major and Craig also asserted Scotland's ancient independence. They did this, as Roger Mason says, because they wanted a union of equals, not subjection to England.²³ Major insisted that a union between England and Scotland could not be seen in the same light as that of England with Wales, because Wales was a conquered country.²⁴ Craig, although writing at a time when Scotland and England shared a king, insists that a Scottish king, like an English one, 'recognizes no superior'.²⁵ But writers before 1707 were talking about a *prospective* union, which was achieved in that year, on ostensibly equal terms. Robertson, however, writes *after* the Union, and if this Union is satisfactory, there is no need to restate arguments about independence. Robertson does say that such arguments are 'a matter of mere curiosity' (*SI*: 213), but it is doubtful if he thought this. He

²² David Allan, '“This Inquisitive Age”: Past and Present in the Scottish Enlightenment', *Scottish Historical Review*, 76 (1997), 69-85, (pp. 73, 74).

²³ Roger A. Mason, 'The Scottish Reformation and the Origins of Anglo-British Imperialism', in *Scots and Britons: Scottish Political Thought and the Union of 1603*, ed. by Roger A. Mason, (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 161-187, (pp. 166-167, 184-185).

²⁴ Major, p. 219.

²⁵ Thomas Craig, *De Unione*, p. 407.

believed in the 'dignity of history', which required 'separating the materials of historical composition from those which fall under the provinces of the Antiquary and of the writer of Memoirs'.²⁶ 'Mere curiosity', the sphere of the antiquary, has no place in Robertson's historiography. If he asserted Scotland's independence in 1759, the question had contemporary relevance.

The period between 1707 and 1830 has been called a period of 'semi-independence' for Scotland.²⁷ The terms of the Union left Scotland much autonomy. Nonetheless, the mid-eighteenth century saw an assertion of 'Scottishness', which took the political form of agitation for a Scottish militia, in which Robertson and his fellow Moderates took a central role. The militia was to defend Scotland against French invasions during the Seven Years and American wars, but it also had patriotic, ideological significance. Robertson's Scottish history, evoking Scotland's martial independent past, was published in 1759, the year in which serious militia agitation began. As John Robertson shows, this history is important in illustrating the Scottish ideology connected to the militia question.²⁸ Robertson's views on the subject are evident in a letter of 1760, describing the militia issue as 'a transaction certainly of more importance than any that has happened since the Union, and which [...] people of fashion have considered as not half so momentous as the disposition of the Supper at the Minister's Ball'.²⁹ Patriotism set the tone for the militia controversy. Alexander Carlyle's militia pamphlet, which Robertson scrutinized before publication, and to which he may have contributed (*NE*: 105),³⁰ evokes the 'great patriot' Fletcher and

²⁶ Dugald Stewart, p. 107.

²⁷ Christopher Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics, 1707-1945*, (London, 1977), p. 62; Murdoch, *People Above*, p. 27.

²⁸ John Robertson, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the Militia Issue*, (Edinburgh, 1985), pp. 78-80.

²⁹ Robertson to Charles Townshend, 23/2/1760, *Charles Townshend Papers*, Bundle 295/3/22, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.

³⁰ Alexander Carlyle, *Anecdotes and Characters of the Times*, ed. by James Kinsley, (London, New York and Toronto, 1973), p. 203.

imagines the reply he would have made to anyone suggesting, as Carlyle sarcastically writes, that Scots were 'beholden to the generous English, who had undertaken to protect them'. The importance of the question is plain in the statement that, should the 1760 militia bill fail in Parliament, 'it had been good for Scotland that there had been no union'.³¹ Despite the allusions to 'Britain' in the pamphlet, the implication is that the Union is *not* being treated by the English as an equal partnership. As John Robertson points out, the Moderates wished to 'restore Scottish society to its own past' and this concern suggests that submergence in 'Britishness' was not wholly desirable for them. John Robertson contrasts the Moderates' appeal to the Scottish past with the views of Hume, 'whose wider orientation was European' and Smith who showed 'a commitment to unitary Parliamentary sovereignty within the British Empire'. Considering these 'cosmopolitan' and 'British' views, John Robertson is right to say that Hume and Smith saw the Moderates' concern with militia as 'wilful parochialism'.³² Hume's essays seldom consider Scotland, except to mention Covenanting fanaticism or the economic benefits of union. His European convictions are obvious in that he finds the British governmental system unstable, and believes that it must eventually become a republic or an absolute monarchy, which is the form Hume prefers.³³ Smith plainly thinks incorporating Union has been wholly advantageous to Scotland and advocates the creation of a super-Britain in which Ireland and America are similarly incorporated.³⁴

Both Hume and Smith are content to see Scotland submerged in a larger entity. It could

³¹ [Alexander Carlyle], *The Question relating to a Scots Militia Considered in a Letter to the Lords and Gentlemen who have concerted the Form of a Law for that Establishment, By a Freeholder*, (Edinburgh, 1760), pp. 12-13, 28, 31-32.

³² John Robertson, *Militia Issue*, pp. 143, 242, 243.

³³ David Hume, 'Of Superstition and Enthusiasm', in *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. by Eugene F. Miller, (Indianapolis, 1985), pp. 73-79, (p. 77); 'Of the Balance of Trade', in *Essays*, pp. 308-326 (p. 314); 'Whether the British Government Inclines more to Absolute Monarchy or to a Republic', in *Essays*, pp. 47-53, (pp. 51-53).

³⁴ Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, 2 vols, ed. by R.H. Campbell and A.S. Skinner, (Indianapolis, 1981), II, pp. 944-945.

be argued that Fletcher advocated something similar, a confederal Europe of equal sized states which, as John Robertson shows, would entail the disappearance of an independent Scotland.³⁵ Fletcher's scheme, however, was offered as an alternative to incorporating Union, and was grounded in fear of English domination.³⁶ This is consistent with his Parliamentary speech stressing the importance of keeping Scotland 'free from the influence of English councils and ministers'.³⁷ Like Fletcher, the Moderates worked politically. They did not appear in Parliament themselves; Scottish M.P.s did the work in Westminster. As ministers, however, they had another sphere of political activity. Presbyteries and Synods were made to pass militia resolutions. When the militia bill failed in 1760, Robertson advised that the General Assembly send 'an address in a vigorous strain' to the King.³⁸

Working within the Union, the militia advocates were less outspoken than Fletcher. As John Robertson says, Scottish independence 'was hardly an appropriate theme for an assembly dominated by Englishmen', which is what the Westminster Parliament was. The result is that 'British' solidarity and admiration of the English militia often occur in speeches and writings connected with the militia question, where they sit oddly with the appeals to Fletcher and independence. John Robertson makes the point that this admiration for England is misleading; the Moderates continued to see the question in 'Scottish' terms of the martial past.³⁹

However, his belief that the militia agitations were, unlike Fletcher's actions, a politically empty precursor of 'the modern kilt-ridden tradition of Scottishness' must be treated with caution. His book on the militia issue started as a doctoral dissertation

³⁵ John Robertson, 'Introduction', in Fletcher, *Political Works*, pp. ix-xxx, (p. xxvii).

³⁶ Fletcher, 'Conversation', pp. 188-192, 203-215.

³⁷ Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, 'Speeches by a member of the Parliament which began at Edinburgh the 6th of May, 1703', in *Political Works*, pp. 129-173, (p. 141).

³⁸ Robertson to Gilbert Elliot of Minto, 30/4/1760, *Minto Papers*, MS 11009, f. 70, NLS.

³⁹ John Robertson, *Militia Issue*, pp. 110, 243.

supervised by Lord Dacre, and his mentor's views seem reflected in the work's tendency to see Scotland's salvation in a move away from the 'Scottish' past to a 'British' or 'cosmopolitan' future.⁴⁰ John Robertson's view is shared by other holders of 'British' or 'cosmopolitan' views. For Kidd, 'the Scottish past remained vivid and distinct' but it was 'denuded of ideological significance' and 'as a repository of political and institutional value [it] remained empty' (*SSP*: 210,215). Similarly, O'Brien sees Robertson's admiration for the Scottish past only as 'carefully contrived nostalgia' (*NE*: 108). It is misleading to say, as John Robertson does, that the Moderates had no desire for institutional change in Scotland, and to compare the militia controversy to the one surrounding Ossian.⁴¹ A militia *is* an institution; its creation would have been a change. What its result would have been is uncertain. It cannot be estimated by what happened when a militia *was* created in the different atmosphere of the 1790's. Whatever the outcome, a national, armed institution would have been created. That it was regarded as an important issue by government is plain from the hostility, described by John Robertson himself, with which the rulers in London, including the King, regarded it.⁴² That the Moderates took the militia issue seriously is evident by their continued agitation despite government hostility, when the Moderate political arrangement called for co-operation with government. Romantic Scottishness was, admittedly, beginning to appear at the same time—the Ossian controversy is almost contemporary with the militia one—and both issues share a common invocation of a martial Scottish past. However, the Scottishness associated with Ossian differs from that involved in the militia question in that it looks to the (romanticized) highlands for inspiration, and has no institutional significance. Between armed defensive institutions

⁴⁰ John Robertson, *Militia Issue*, pp. v, 243.

⁴¹ John Robertson, *Militia Issue*, pp. 185, 242.

⁴² John Robertson, *Militia Issue*, p. 112.

on the one hand, and bards on the other there is a strong difference. Robertson himself, while seeing the militia issue as crucial, took little interest in Ossian, compared to his fellow Moderates John Home and Hugh Blair. The 1805 Highland Society report on Ossian's authenticity mentions him only as a name in a list of literati who met together to encourage Macpherson's Ossianic researches in 1759.⁴³ John Robertson's insistence that the Moderates were 'content with the image rather than the institution of a militia' is an overstatement.⁴⁴ An issue that gets as far as Parliament means a great deal to its supporters. Sher is correct to say that, for Robertson, 'the militia issue was a critical test of the liberty of Scotland and the viability of the Union'.⁴⁵

If, as Sher says, the militia question was a test of the Union's integrity, then the test was plainly failed. What conclusions Robertson drew from this are unknown. His statements on the 1707 Union are, as I shall illustrate, few and ambivalent. His views on English attitudes in general are sometimes visible. Commending Smith on the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, he writes that 'it comforts the English a good deal to hear that you were bred at Oxford; they claim some part of you on that account'.⁴⁶ He praised Macpherson's translation of Homer, criticizing the 'rage and clamour of the English' who condemned it.⁴⁷ When advising a younger historian, Somerville, on writing a history of Queen Anne's reign, Robertson told him to pay attention to the deeds of Marlborough, because 'John Bull [...] would not endure a history that did not make them the prominent theme'.⁴⁸ Such evidence shows Robertson taking a derisive view of English pretensions. Of course, flashes of Anglophobia can be found

⁴³ Henry Mackenzie, *Report of the Committee of the Highland Society of Scotland, Appointed to Enquire into the Nature and Authenticity of the Poems of Ossian*, (Edinburgh, 1805), Appendix IV, pp. 58-70.

⁴⁴ John Robertson, *Militia Issue*, p. 185.

⁴⁵ Sher, *Church*, p. 227.

⁴⁶ Robertson to Smith, 14/7/ [1759], in *Correspondence*, p. 40.

⁴⁷ Bailey Saunders, *Life and Letters of James Macpherson*, (London, 1894; reprint, New York, 1969), p. 222.

⁴⁸ Thomas Somerville, *My Own Life and Times*, (Edinburgh, 1861), pp. 268-269.

even in Scots like Hume and Boswell. The difference is these Scots were nonetheless drawn to England and 'British' assimilation. Hume considered living in London—although he seems to have been happiest in France—only retiring to Edinburgh when English Scotophobia became unbearable.⁴⁹ The letter in which Hume states his preference for the Continent over England suggests the rejected suitor: 'Am I or are you an Englishman? Will they allow us to be so? Do they not treat with Derision our Pretensions to that name?'⁵⁰ Boswell was notoriously fond of London, and realized that he differed from 'Hume and Robertson [who] prefer Scotland. But they have neither that permanent peculiar love of London [...] which I have, nor are they so much in unison with the English as I am'.⁵¹ This wish to be 'one of them' is not found in Robertson. In fact, he refused to live in London. Lord Bute wished Robertson to write a history of England. He wanted Robertson to move to London, so as to be near the British Museum and, as James McKelvey suggests, to keep an eye on him.⁵² Robertson refused to move. He later wrote that 'Lord Bute's first scheme was to take me out of the Church and fix my residence in London. This I absolutely declined' It was 'only with some difficulty' that Bute could be convinced, but 'at last by my obstinacy I gained my point'.⁵³ This example of the independence which Robertson showed to the 'great men' of government, in private and political life, also shows his resolute desire to stay at home, even though Bute's plans for him were described as 'higher than any views which can open to you in Scotland'.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Phillipson, *Hume*, p. 13.

⁵⁰ David Hume to Gilbert Elliot of Minto, 22/9/1764, in *The Letters of David Hume*, 2 vols, ed. by J.Y.T. Greig, (Oxford, 1932), I, p. 470

⁵¹ James Boswell, *Boswell for the Defense, 1769-1774*, ed. by F.N.K. Wimsatt and Frederick Pottle, (London, 1960), p. 227.

⁵² Lord Cathcart to Robertson, 20/7/1760, *R-McD*, MS 3942, f. 41, NLS; James J. McKelvey, 'William Robertson and Lord Bute', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 6 (1969), 238-247, (p. 241).

⁵³ Robertson to Elliot, 7/8/1762, *Minto Papers*, MS 11009, f. 150, NLS.

⁵⁴ Lord Cathcart to Robertson, 21/7/1761, *R-McD* MS 3942, f. 48, NLS

While Robertson's personal inclinations are obvious, his views on the political situation created by 1707 are less accessible. When Somerville discussed early eighteenth-century history with him, he noted that Robertson was 'scrupulous about giving any opinion' about the Union.⁵⁵ Robertson plainly found it an awkward subject, even in 1792 when this conversation took place. In his history of Scotland, Robertson calls objections to the 1707 Union 'antiquated prejudices' (S I: 313), but this brief statement comes at the end of a long account of an earlier attempt at Union, by Henry VIII, in 1543 (S I: 309-313), in which Robertson describes the objections of the Scots in defensive patriotic terms:

The same hatred to the ancient enemies of their country, the same jealousy of national honour and pride of independence which, at the beginning of the present century went near to prevent the Scots from consenting to an union with England upon terms of great advantage, did, at that time, induce the whole nation to declare against the alliance (S I: 312).

Robertson's assertion of the advantages of Union is made ambiguous by his patriotic description of the objections to it. He does suggest that 1707 differed from 1543 in that 'an hundred and fifty years of peace [...] the habit of being subjected to the same King and governed by the same maxims had considerably abated old animosities' (S I: 312). Robertson, however, knew that the seventeenth century had *not* been peaceful. At the end of the work, he contradicts his statement about the pacific effects of common monarchy by criticizing Charles I, a monarch 'educated among the English' who 'discovered no peculiar attachment to the kingdom of which he was a native', and whose Anglicizing policies resulted in conflict (S III: 189).

This short section at the end of *Scotland*, a survey of history from 1603 to 1707, is where a 'British' Robertson should extol the Union, but again he is brief. There is an 'enlightened'-looking place where the Union is welcomed for checking the power of the

⁵⁵ Somerville, p. 270.

nobility (S I: 191-192). Robertson's views on noble power are, however, inconsistent, unlike Hume's. When dealing with the Stuart period, Robertson despises the nobles for *not* exerting any power against monarchs, for being 'slaves and tyrants' to the King and their feudal subordinates respectively (S I: 190). Only after 1688 do they suddenly have too much power. Robertson's view is therefore neither a Voltairean or Humean one praising order and authority *per se*, nor a wholly 'British' one welcoming the 'civilizing' Union, but a political one. Rebellious nobles after 1688 would be Jacobites, and a Presbyterian Whig would naturally want their power broken.

The other statement about the virtues of the 1707 Union is the last paragraph of *Scotland*, a platitudinous ending described by Fry as 'sanguine to the point of blandness'.⁵⁶ This follows a discussion of language, into which political considerations intrude. Considering language, it is notable that Robertson did not share the obsession with 'Scotticisms' which plagued some other Scots. Robertson did belong to the Select Society, and one of this society's objectives was to encourage Scots 'to write a pure and correct standard English free from Scotticisms', but there was a practical reason for this, as Emerson notes: good English and freedom from Scotticisms were 'necessities to Scots who looked to England for a career'.⁵⁷ Robertson did not want an English career, but he did want the English to praise his books. Robertson was aware that one had to speak the language in order to appeal to the English, but he was not concerned with Anglifying Scots speech as an end in itself. His own speech is described by Henry Cockburn, who remembered Robertson in his memoirs, as 'good, honest, natural

⁵⁶ Fry, 'Whig Interpretation', p. 78.

⁵⁷ Roger L. Emerson, 'The Social Composition of Enlightened Scotland: the Select Society of Edinburgh, 1754-1764', *Studies in Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 114 (1973), 291-330, (pp. 298-299).



Scotch'.⁵⁸ Even in writing, Robertson was rather offhand. Hume pointed out Scotticisms in his works.⁵⁹ Walpole did the same regarding *Scotland*.⁶⁰

Robertson's awareness of the practical need to avoid Scotticisms is not the obsession of Hume, who compiled a list of them so that Scots would know what to avoid, and showed an 'incessant desire to eliminate Scotticisms from his own works and those of his friends'.⁶¹ This desire seems to have verged on the compulsive; a copy of the *Edinburgh Review* belonging to Hume shows corrections made to the English of one of Robertson's articles.⁶² Robertson's outlook certainly had nothing in common with that of Boswell, who 'seemed to cringe at the sound of a Scottish accent'.⁶³ By contrast, Robertson's 'pronunciation and accents were strongly marked with the peculiarities of his country; nor was this defect compensated by the graces of his delivery'.⁶⁴ This disapproving view, seeing a Scottish accent as a 'defect' is that of Dugald Stewart, a Scot of a later generation, plainly more gripped by 'Britishness'.

Robertson regretted the decline of Scots as a language, and had a theory explaining it. In the sixteenth century, Scots and English were on a par. Following the lead of King James, who was 'master of a style far from contemptible', Scots 'might have had a series of authors in its own as well as the Latin language to boast of' (*S* III: 196). Unfortunately, 'at the very time when other nations were beginning to drop the use of Latin [...] and make trial of the strength and compass of their own languages, Scotland

⁵⁸ Henry Cockburn, *Memorials of his Time*, ed. by Karl F C. Miller, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974).

⁵⁹ David Hume to Robertson, 8/2/1759, in *New Letters of David Hume*, ed. by R Klibansky and E.C. Mossner, (Oxford, 1954), pp. 45-46; Hume to Robertson, Nov. Or Dec., 1768, in *Letters*, I, p. 194.

⁶⁰ Walpole to Robertson, 4/2/1759, in *Walpole's Correspondence*, XV, pp. 43-45.

⁶¹ James G. Basker, 'Scotticisms and Problems of Cultural Identity in Eighteenth-Century Britain', in *Sociability and Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, ed. by John Dwyer and Richard B. Sher, (Edinburgh, 1993), pp. 81-95, (pp. 84, 91-95).

⁶² M.A. Stewart, 'Introduction' in *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. by M.A. Stewart, 2nd edn, (Oxford, 1998), pp. 1-9, (p. 7).

⁶³ Basker, p. 86.

⁶⁴ Dugald Stewart, p. 134.

ceased to be a kingdom' (S III: 196). This prevents any Scots vernacular literature from developing, and the language begins a decline, in the course of which 'those vicious forms of speech, which are denominated *Scotticisms*' make their appearance. Robertson sees 'Scotticisms' not as an inherent defect of Scottish speech, but as a result of the corruption of that speech, which is almost to say that 'Scotticisms' are not really Scottish. As Allan points out, Robertson's explanation for the seventeenth-century decline of Scots ties him to humanist views about the role of a King and Court in the encouragement of learning and literature which were shared by many seventeenth-century Scottish writers themselves (VL: 157).⁶⁵ Robertson's explanation is not simply 'literary' or 'cultural', however. It is patriotic and political, and faintly critical: Had it not been for the 1603 Union, Scots may have thrived as a language. The association of language with politics continues: the practice of Parliamentary oratory might have helped the language, but, according to Robertson, no true eloquence could develop in the seventeenth-century Scots Parliament: 'all business there was transacted by the lords of articles, and they were so servilely devoted to the court that few debates arose' (S III: 198-199). The association of eloquence with liberty is of course a classical one; Robertson's argument would be recognized in his classics-dominated age. Robertson, in fact insists on the association: the condition of the Scots' language in the seventeenth century 'must be imputed to the unhappiness of their political situation, not to any defect of genius' (S III: 199). Eloquence returns in 1688:

The act abolishing the lords of articles [...] having introduced freedom of debate into the Scottish parliament, eloquence, with all the arts that occupy and perfect it became immediate objects of attention; and the example of Fletcher of Salton alone is sufficient to shew that Scots were still capable of generous sentiments, and [...] were able to express themselves with energy and with eloquence (S III: 199).

⁶⁵ See also David Allan, 'Prudence and Patronage: the Politics of Culture in Seventeenth-Century Scotland', *History of European Ideas*, 18 (1994), 467-480, (pp. 474-477).

‘Generous sentiments’ implies more than oratorical ability; Robertson is plainly impressed by what Fletcher says, as well as by how he says it. This appears odd, in a supposed enthusiast for the Union, considering that Fletcher was a noted enemy of it. His ‘generous sentiments’ were strongly anti-English; precisely what Robertson calls ‘antiquated prejudices’ in his defence of the 1707 Union in the first volume of *Scotland*.

After the Revolution, Scotland appears, in Robertson’s description, to redress the backwardness and subservience of the Stuart era. The final paragraph of the work, which follows the praise of Fletcher and which praises the Union, seems incongruous, vaguely acknowledging that, by the Union, ‘The Scots, after being placed [...] in a situation no less fatal to the liberty than to the taste and genius of the nation, were at once put in possession of privileges more valuable than those which their ancestors had formerly enjoyed’ (*S* III: 200). Robertson has, however, already said that the *Revolution* established liberty, in specific terms. To say that the *Union* did this as well seems superfluous. Moreover, the Union abolished the free Scottish parliament which allowed the development of Fletcherian eloquence and generosity of sentiment. If Robertson considered that post-Union Scots were freer than ever, then his conviction that eloquence is linked to political condition should, logically, make him see post-Union Scots as more eloquent than ever. This is not the case, as Somerville records:

Upon my saying that it might naturally have been expected that the scanty representation from Scotland would be absorbed in the mass of the English representation, especially in any question of conflicting interest [...] he said that this was the more to be feared on account of the disadvantages under which our members suffered immediately after the Union. The want of English and their uncouth manners were much against them.⁶⁶

Robertson’s concern goes beyond bad English. He agrees with Somerville that Scottish M.P.’s are swamped—possibly recalling the 1760 militia bill. Only two of the Scottish

⁶⁶ Somerville, pp. 270-271.

M.P.'s in Parliament voted against the bill, but it failed.⁶⁷ The fact that post-Union Scottish M.P.'s cannot speak well makes matters worse. This reflects his realization that one needs to speak the language to make an impression on the English. What is striking are Robertson's different views concerning Scots in two different Parliaments. Fletcher and others in the free Scottish Parliament are eloquent speakers. The Scottish M.P's in the early post-Union Parliaments are inarticulate. Robertson is plainly not speaking about the same men, although between 35 and 37 of the 45 Scots who went to Westminster in 1708 also served in Scottish Parliaments from 1703 to 1707, with Fletcher. Their names appear without fail on the lists of 'yes' votes for every article of the Union treaty.⁶⁸ The good speakers and expressers of 'generous sentiments' are plainly not the Scots who went to Westminster. As Robertson dismisses those who did as uncouth, bad speakers, and as he associates eloquence with liberty, his conclusions regarding the post-Union parliament and the Scots who went there are at least open to question.

2) Presbyterianism

The second context in which Robertson must be considered is that of Presbyterianism. The effect that Presbyterian values had on him has not been fully considered, because of the prevailing belief that the Presbyterianism of Robertson and the Moderates whom he led broke with the Kirk's supposedly unruly past.

Some confusion is undoubtedly caused by the change which the Kirk had to

⁶⁷ John Robertson, *Militia Issue*, pp. 112-113.

⁶⁸ A list of the Scottish M.P's in the first post-Union Parliament is appended to Lilian F.C. MacQueen, ' "Odd-looking, dull men": A Historical Fallacy', *Scottish Historical Review*, 35 (1956), 1-9. Lists of the members of the Scottish Parliaments in the 1702-1707 period, and their votes, are in *Acts of the Parliament of Scotland*, ed. by T. Thomson et al., 12 vols, (Edinburgh, 1814-1875), XI, pp. 29-31, 113-115, 205-208, 300-302, 313-315, 327-327, 329-330, 332-333, 339-340, 348-350, 352-354, 375-377, 378-380, 385-386, 395-396, 404-406.

make after the Revolution. Before that, Presbyterianism had often been opposed to government. Scottish Protestantism was created in opposition to monarchical Catholicism, and had to fight for its existence. Even after Presbyterianism was formally established in 1592, Scotland's rulers disliked it. James VI and I undermined it gradually. Charles I overdid this, causing the National Covenant and civil war. After 1638, Presbyterianism had more power than ever before. The English Parliament, needing help against Charles, had to accept Presbyterianism by the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643. With Cromwell's invasion and enforced union with England, Presbyterian power was reduced. The Restoration brought back episcopacy and Presbyterians were regarded once again with official suspicion, and often persecuted. The hard-line Covenanters were a minority, who rose in armed rebellion, but other Presbyterians also suffered. Robertson's great-great grandfather, the minister Patrick Anderson, was imprisoned on the Bass Rock in 1678.⁶⁹

After the Revolution, Presbyterianism found itself on the side of government, becoming the officially recognized form of Christianity in Scotland. Some change in outlook was required. Robertson and his Moderates are held to have helped overturn the Kirk's identity, by enforcing the 1712 Patronage Act and making the Kirk more 'polite' and tolerant. However, there is also continuity between Robertson's Presbyterianism and the sterner traditions of the Kirk. Robertson was, in fact, less 'Moderate' than many of the party he led.

Robertson's whole family history is powerfully Presbyterian. Patrick Anderson is an example. According to a genealogy owned by Robertson's great-nephew Brougham, a sixteenth-century ancestor, John Row, having been a Catholic priest, became 'one of the most zealous of the Reformers'. His son, another John Row, was minister of

⁶⁹ William Ferguson, 'Introduction', in Anderson, p. 2.

Carnock and the writer of an important, and highly Presbyterian, church history. He married Grizell Ferguson, daughter of David Ferguson, 'the friend of John Knox'.⁷⁰ Robertson's father was minister of Borthwick, and his upbringing was sternly Presbyterian. John Erskine, Robertson's contemporary and political rival, observes that Robertson's father, was 'esteemed a Calvinist divine'.⁷¹ He made his son promise never to enter a theatre, which the worldly Moderate Alexander Carlyle sees as typical of 'the strictness [...] in the families of clergymen when the Doctor received his education'.⁷² According to Robertson's great-nephew, he always kept this promise, even though he defended his fellow Moderates Carlyle and John Home during the *Douglas* controversy.⁷³ It has been suggested that he saw plays in London, but evidence is not conclusive.⁷⁴ Home shocked strict Presbyterians by writing the play *Douglas*, and Carlyle by going to see it. Apart from defending them, Robertson took no active part in promoting the 'polite' amusement of playgoing. Robertson also differed from worldly Moderates like Carlyle in not playing cards.⁷⁵ An early mentor who first noticed Robertson's oratorical ability was Edward Stedman, Minister of Haddington, 'an old-fashioned Presbyterian'.⁷⁶ As a young minister, Robertson was commended by fellow-ministers for 'the solidity of his doctrine'.⁷⁷

Robertson was not a practicing theologian, so the question of his doctrine is

⁷⁰ *Brougham Papers*, MS 48. 150, University College Library.

⁷¹ John Erskine, 'The Agency of God in Human Greatness: Preached 16th June 1793, being the Lord's Day after Dr William Robertson's death', in *MWC*, pp. 240-277, (p. 264).

⁷² *Carlyle Papers*, MS 23920, f. 91, NLS.

⁷³ Henry, Lord Brougham, 'Robertson', in *Lives of Men of Letters and Science who flourished in the Time of George III*, 2 vols, (London, 1845-1846), I, pp. 256-323, (p. 257).

⁷⁴ Stewart J. Brown, 'William Robertson (1721-1793) and the Scottish Enlightenment', in *Expansion of Empire*, pp. 7-35, (p. 18). Brown cites as evidence a letter written by Robertson from London dated 22/2/1758 (*Saltoun Papers*, MS 16707, ff. 92-95, NLS), giving a detailed account of a performance of Home's *Agis* at Drury Lane. There is nothing in the letter to suggest that the writer attended in person, however; he could be repeating a description given to him by a friend.

⁷⁵ Carlyle, *Anecdotes*, p. 148.

⁷⁶ *Carlyle Papers*, MS 23920, f. 82, NLS.

⁷⁷ *Carlyle Papers*, MS 23920, f. 89, NLS.

difficult. The assumption that Moderatism broke with traditional Presbyterianism has, however, led to suggestions that Robertson was Arminian rather than Calvinist. Lord Dacre calls him 'the Arminian historian'.⁷⁸ Smitten believes that Arminianism may have helped to create the more tolerant outlook of the Moderates.⁷⁹ Theologically, Arminianism allows free will a greater role in determining salvation than the predestination of Calvinism, and therefore would logically encourage a looser general outlook. Historically, Arminians tended to assert the authority of the civil magistrate over the church (Erastianism), which Moderates are also held to have done. J.G.A. Pocock goes so far as to wonder 'whether the "Scottish" was a regional and late variant of the "Arminian Enlightenment", in which criticism of the Calvinist absolute decrees developed into an erastian politics, a pursuit of polite culture and a reputation [...] for anti-Trinitarian theology'.⁸⁰ None of these characteristics can be fully applied to Robertson. The system of independent co-operation with government operated by the Moderates while Robertson led them was, as Clark points out, not Erastian subservience.⁸¹ Robertson's commitment to 'polite culture' was half-hearted, compared to that of other Moderates, as I shall illustrate. He was never accused of heterodox theology. Even the Free Kirk historian W.M. Hetherington, while saying that heterodoxy flourished under the Moderates, does not accuse Robertson himself of heresy.⁸² That Robertson was familiar with Arminian literature, as Smitten points out, seems a flimsy foundation for suggesting Arminian influence. Smitten also refers to an

⁷⁸ Hugh Trevor-Roper, (Lord Dacre), 'The Religious Origins of the Enlightenment', in *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change, and Other Essays*, 2nd edn, (London, 1972), pp. 193-236, (p. 214).

⁷⁹ Jeffrey Smitten, 'The Shaping of Moderation: William Robertson and Arminianism', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 22 (1985), 281-300, (pp. 282-283).

⁸⁰ J.G.A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, 2 vols, (Cambridge, 1999), II: *Narratives of Civil Government*, p. 270.

⁸¹ I.D.L. Clark, 'From Protest to Reaction: The Moderate Regime in the Church of Scotland, 1752-1805', in *Age of Improvement*, pp. 200-224, (p. 211).

⁸² W.M. Hetherington, *History of the Church of Scotland, from the Introduction of Christianity to the Meetings of the Commission of the General Assembly in August 1841*, 2nd edn, (Edinburgh, 1842), p. 673.

exercise Robertson performed in 1743 as part of the trials preparatory to being licensed to preach. This was a discourse on the history of Arminianism, up to the Synod of Dordrecht in 1619. Smitten suggests that Robertson's proposers 'would have been sympathetic to Arminian thought' because one of them, Thomas Turnbull, later sided with the Moderates, but also acknowledges that the Presbytery of Dalkeith, who set Robertson the exercise, may, 'have been a mixture of liberals and conservatives'.⁸³ The choice of Dordrecht as a cut-off point may indicate that conservatives predominated, because that Synod saw the defeat of Arminianism. Robertson seems to have satisfied the Presbytery, which might mean that he, too, took a conservative position.

As Smitten acknowledges, even John Erskine, a leading High-Flyer and Robertson's political opponent insisted on Robertson's orthodoxy.⁸⁴ In a sermon preached shortly after Robertson's death, Erskine acknowledges that Robertson read Arminian books, but, he continues, 'unjust it would be, to infer from this, that he approved those of their leading opinions, plainly opposite to the Westminster Confession'. According to Erskine, Robertson resisted any attempts to abolish subscription to that Confession.⁸⁵ The agitation by some Moderates for abolition was suggested by another prominent High-Flyer, Sir Henry Wellwood-Moncreiff as a reason for Robertson's retirement from politics in 1780.⁸⁶ In conversation with Carlyle, Robertson called the agitation 'heresy', and the worldly Carlyle thought that he overestimated the danger from 'what he called a Heresy'.⁸⁷ This suggests a desire in Carlyle to distance himself from an archaic concept like 'heresy'—not a word one expects to find used seriously by a shining star of the Enlightenment. Robertson, in

⁸³ Smitten, 'Arminianism', pp. 286, 299.

⁸⁴ Smitten 'Arminianism'. p. 284

⁸⁵ Erskine, p. 264.

⁸⁶ Dugald Stewart, pp. 199-200.

⁸⁷ *Carlyle Papers*, MS 23920, f. 76, NLS.

short, defended a Confession created at the Kirk's most triumphant Covenanted moment, when England was forced to accept Presbyterianism in the 1640s. This hardly suggests a break with the Presbyterian past.

Robertson's attitudes to the Covenanted that created the Westminster Confession have been misrepresented. Richard Finlay says that he 'referred to Covenanted as having its origins in banditry'.⁸⁸ In fact, Robertson links Covenanted to the Scottish noble practice of 'forming of a bond of mutual defense' (S III: 84). This is not the same as 'banditry', or armed robbery. Robertson also gives Covenanted a far more respectable origin:

When [...] alarmed by any public danger, the people of Israel were accustomed to bind themselves by a solemn covenant to adhere to that religion which the almighty had established among them; this the Scots considered a sacred precedent, which it became them to imitate (S III: 84).

Robertson grounds Covenanted firmly in the Bible, a fact generally ignored. Even David Allan only states vaguely that Robertson gives 'a relatively favourable account of Covenant theology' (VL: 167). Robertson's attribution of a Biblical origin makes nonsense of Kidd's statement that he saw Covenanted as merely 'derived from the mundane political and military bond' (SSP: 194). Robertson goes on to trace the history of the Covenant in a way that makes it seem unexceptionable, mentioning that the English subscribed to it in 1643 (S III: 84-85). Only after all this does he say briefly that the seventeenth-century Covenant was used for 'violent and unconstitutional measures' (S III: 85). This single phrase is used by Kidd and Finlay to explain Robertson's views on Covenanted (SSP: 194).⁸⁹ Robertson's sincerity here, however, is questionable, because when he discusses religious upheavals in seventeenth-century Scotland, he

⁸⁸ Richard J. Finlay, 'Keeping the Covenant: Scottish National Identity', in *Eighteenth-Century Scotland: New Perspectives*, ed. by T.M. Devine and J.R. Young, (East Linton, 1999), pp. 121-133, (p. 125).

⁸⁹ Finlay, p. 125.

blames them on royal policy, not Covenanters. King James, 'delighted with the splendour and authority which English bishops enjoyed' tries to Anglicize the Scottish church (S III: 193). The Scottish clergy are praised as 'less obsequious' than the laity in that they 'boldly opposed these innovations' (S III: 193). Charles I, 'a superstitious prince unacquainted with the genius of the Scots', by 'pressing too eagerly the reception of the English liturgy [...] kindled the flames of civil war' (S III: 193). Robertson significantly stresses the foreignness of the ecclesiastical innovations, linking Presbyterianism and patriotism. This connection was made early in Scottish Protestant history. The Protestant Lords of the Congregation, fighting against Mary of Guise in the late 1550's, were as much concerned with French domination as with Protestantism, as Knox's account shows.⁹⁰ Hume of Godscroft made similar associations when, according to Arthur Williamson, he saw that episcopacy would lead to English domination over Scotland.⁹¹ Similar fears caused Presbyterians to oppose the Union; as John Robertson points out, the proposed British Parliament, dominated by members of the Church of England, threatened Presbyterian security.⁹²

Robertson's opinion of Covenanters also emerges in a sermon commemorating the 1688 Revolution. He describes the late seventeenth-century Covenanters as 'encompassed by danger, and like the Jewish builders of old [...] carrying on the holy work with one hand, obliged to hold the sword with the other'.⁹³ Once again, the Presbyterian past is linked to the Bible. There is no sign that he finds the turbulent Presbyterian past embarrassing, even when speaking of late seventeenth-century

⁹⁰ John Knox, *History of the Reformation in Scotland*, ed. by William Croft Dickinson, 2 vols, (London, 1949), I, pp. 252-253.

⁹¹ Arthur H. Williamson, *Scottish National Consciousness in the Age of James VI: the Apocalypse, the Union and the Shaping of Scotland's Public Culture*, (Edinburgh, 1979), p. 89.

⁹² John Robertson, 'An Elusive Sovereignty: The Course of the Union Debate in Scotland, 1698-1707', in *Union for Empire*, pp. 198-227, (p. 219).

⁹³ William Robertson, 'Sermon on the Centenary of the Glorious Revolution, 1788', in *MWC*, pp. 175-185, (p. 181).

Covenanters whom Hume felt should have been granted toleration on grounds of insanity, 'treating them like madmen, who should be soothed and flattered, and deceived into tranquility'.⁹⁴

That Robertson retained much of the independence regarding authority that is a legacy of the oppositional history of Presbyterianism and which took its extremest form in Covenanting, is confirmed again by Erskine: 'Great men in office were always ready to countenance him, to co-operate with him [...] yet he scorned to be their slave, or to submit to receive their instructions'.⁹⁵ Moncreiff-Wellwood supports this, saying that Robertson 'had the magnanimity to emancipate himself from a dependence on any great man'.⁹⁶ It should again be stressed that these testimonials come from Robertson's political enemies. Jeremy Cater notices that Robertson 'always managed to retain the respect of the high-flyers as did no other leading Moderate'.⁹⁷ Robertson and his more openly traditional Presbyterian opponents may have had more in common than might be thought. Even anti-Moderate divines of the nineteenth century, more censorious than Robertson's actual opponents, are restrained about Robertson. Hetherington criticizes Robertson for 'his more than ambiguous views of the Mosaic record [...] and his own published letters to Gibbon'.⁹⁸ Robert Rainy, who devotes a whole lecture to denouncing Moderatism, only mildly condemns Robertson as being too 'refined and literary'.⁹⁹ Hetherington's criticisms, by his own citation, are taken from Wilberforce, who also singles out Robertson's treatment of the Mosaic account, and his relations

⁹⁴ Hume, *History*, VI, p. 322.

⁹⁵ Erskine, pp. 272-273.

⁹⁶ Sir Henry Moncreiff-Wellwood, Bart., *Account of the Life and Writings of John Erskine, D.D.*, (Edinburgh, 1818), p. 462.

⁹⁷ Jeremy J. Cater, 'The Making of Principal Robertson in 1762: Politics and the University of Edinburgh in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century', *Scottish Historical Review*, 49 (1970), 60-84, (p. 83).

⁹⁸ Hetherington, pp. 674-675.

⁹⁹ Robert Rainy, *Three Lectures on the Church of Scotland, with Especial Reference to the Dean of Westminster's Recent Course on that Subject*, (Edinburgh, 1872), p. 81.

with Gibbon.¹⁰⁰ Robertson's Presbyterian critic has to borrow abuse from an Evangelical Anglican representing a very different ecclesiastical tradition. On more Presbyterian territory, Hetherington has to admit that Robertson opposed 'the insubordination of the heretical division of his forces' and that this 'sagacious opposition' helped suppress agitation against the Westminster Confession.¹⁰¹ Importantly, Wilberforce was attacked by a correspondent in *Blackwoods Magazine* for his criticisms of Robertson. 'Had the venerable Dr Erskine been still alive, he would not have stood by and listened while the fame of one [...] whose general worth he most fully appreciated, was blown upon by such unmerited scandal'.¹⁰² The writer's familiarity with Scottish ministers suggests that he was a Scottish Presbyterian himself; significantly, he finds Wilberforce's accusations of poor Christianity 'unmerited' and calls in Robertson's opponent Erskine in support. Views like Wilberforce's were not general in the eighteenth century, although Robertson was criticized anonymously for suggesting, in *Charles V*, that Protestants persecuted as well as Catholics.¹⁰³ This Robertson indeed does, but he stresses that Catholics were the first persecutors and that Protestants only responded in kind (*C* II: 408-409). On the other hand, a lengthy review of *Charles V* accuses Robertson of Protestant bias in his description of the Reformation.¹⁰⁴ Robertson's view of the Mosaic record is connected with his work on India and best discussed below. Robertson's friendship with Gibbon was grounded in admiration for his ability, and had little relevance to religion. Robertson's correspondence reveals religious differences. He praised volume I of the *Decline and*

¹⁰⁰ William Wilberforce, *A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes of This Country, contrasted with Real Christianity*, 2nd edition, (London, 1797), pp. 386-387.

¹⁰¹ Hetherington, pp. 787, 692.

¹⁰² 'Euthus', 'On Some Calumnies against the Dead', *Blackwoods Magazine*, 2 (Jan-March 1818), pp 400-402, (p. 400).

¹⁰³ 'A Protestant', 'Letter to the Printer', *Caledonian Mercury*, 5 February 1774, 3.

¹⁰⁴ [Owen Ruffhead], Review of *Charles V*, *Monthly Review*, 40 (Jan-June 1769), pp. 320-333 and 41 (Jul-Dec 1769), pp. 81-94, (p. 82).

Fall, but added that he had not read the controversial last two chapters; he also worried that Gibbon might be too partial to Julian the Apostate.¹⁰⁵ More revealingly, he commended Lord Hailes's book criticizing Gibbon, saying that 'Every friend of religion [...] must concur with me in considering the work as a necessary and a useful one'.¹⁰⁶ Robertson maintained the same outlook towards all 'enlightened' historians. Of Voltaire, he writes that 'if he had left religion untouched he is instructive and agreeable' (C I: 290). Voltaire's contemptuous treatment of the Scottish Reformation and Presbyterianism generally is abundantly evident in his major works, with which Robertson must have been familiar.¹⁰⁷ Writing to his French translator Robertson says that 'I cannot approve of every aspect which philosophy has assumed in your country', which obviously refers to *philosophe* religious positions.¹⁰⁸ Robertson and Voltaire are clearly not sympathetic to each other's outlook. Robertson's dealings with Hume are similar. Lady Anne Lindsay, who witnessed conversations between Hume and Robertson observes that both men 'continue to maintain their ground' about religion. Robertson's talk must have been convincing, because she could even hope that 'some day Hume will say to him "Thou almost persuades me to be a Christian"'.¹⁰⁹ Hume for his part wrote that 'I never heard Robertson reproach himself with the godly Strain of his history', which implies that he thought a 'godly strain' a matter for reproach.¹¹⁰

Suggestions of sympathy with infidel views do not really stick to Robertson, and that he showed un-Presbyterian subservience to government was refuted even by his

¹⁰⁵ Robertson to William Strahan, 1/5/1776, and Robertson to Edward Gibbon, 12/5/1781, in Edward Gibbon, *Miscellaneous Works*, 5 vols, ed. by Lord Sheffield, 2nd edition, (London, 1804), II, pp. 159-160, 249.

¹⁰⁶ Robertson to Lord Hailes, 22/3/1787, *Newhailes Papers*, MS 25304, f. 87, NLS.

¹⁰⁷ Voltaire, *Letters on England*, ed. and trans. by Leonard Tancock, (London, 1980), pp. 40-41; *An Essay on Universal History, the Manners and Spirit of Nations, from the Reign of Charlemaign to the Age of Lewis XIV*, 3 vols, trans. by Mr Nugent, new edn, (Edinburgh, 1777), II, pp. 331-333; *The Age of Louis XIV*, ed. by F.C. Green, trans. by Martyn P. Pollack, (London, 1961), p. 396.

¹⁰⁸ Robertson to Suard, 21/2/1773, in 'Original Letters', p. 10.

¹⁰⁹ Ernest Campbell Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*, (Edinburgh, 1954), p. 570.

¹¹⁰ Hume to Hugh Blair, 25/3/1766, in *Letters*, II, p. 31.

opponents. Boswell does call Robertson 'the leader of the court party' in an anonymous article in the *London Magazine*, and this, as Sher says, 'suggests political subservience' in Robertson.¹¹¹ Boswell's view of Robertson, however, was changeable. Sher sees the ambivalence, saying that Boswell, as a Scottish Presbyterian landowner, disliked Robertson but that 'as a self-conscious London man of letters, Boswell treated Robertson graciously'.¹¹² A case can be made for reversing this position. It is, after all, from London that Boswell criticizes 'all that set who associate with David Hume and Robertson', who 'are doing all that they can to destroy politeness'.¹¹³ Furthermore, Sher himself admits that Boswell considered Presbyterianism inferior in 'decency' to the Church of England and thought the General Assembly 'vulgar'. It is unlikely that Boswell had any genuine commitment to Presbyterianism. The main motivation for his disdain appears, as Sher notices, to have been snobbish resentment of Robertson's success, 'while landed gentlemen like himself had to struggle to make ends meet'.¹¹⁴ Boswell may also have disliked Robertson's view of Johnson. Robertson found Boswell's attitude to Johnson absurd; when Boswell said that he worshipped Johnson, Robertson retorted 'you should worship no man'.¹¹⁵

Presbyterian independence has a long history, going back to Knox hectoring Queen Mary. Before 1688, this independence often appeared as active resistance. Knox devised a 'resistance theory', based on religion, which started off being merely anti-Papal but, by the time he made notes for the proposed *Second Blast*, had become a

¹¹¹ [James Boswell], 'A Sketch of the Constitution of the Church of *Scotland*, and of the State of Parties in it at present, with Specimens of the Oratory of some of the most distinguished Members of that Church now living', *London Magazine*, 41 (1772), 181-187, 237-242, (p. 184); Richard B. Sher, 'Scots Divines and Legal Laids: Boswell's Scottish Presbyterian Identity', in *New Light on Boswell: Critical and Historical Essays on the Occasion of the Bicentenary of 'The Life of Johnson'*, ed. by G. Clingham, (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 28-55, (p. 46).

¹¹² Sher, 'Scots Divines', p. 31.

¹¹³ James Boswell, *Boswell's London Journal*, ed. by Frederick A. Pottle, (London, 1958), p. 236.

¹¹⁴ Sher, 'Scots Divines', pp. 43, 46-47, 49.

¹¹⁵ James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, L.L.D.*, ed. by Sydney Roberts, 2 vols, (London, 1960), II, p. 236.

justification for deposing tyrannical monarchs.¹¹⁶ Buchanan's more secular, humanist 'resistance theory', expounded in his *De Jure* and illustrated by his Scottish history, was embraced by generations of Presbyterians struggling against government, becoming as Kidd says, 'the dominant mode of political argument among Scottish Presbyterians (SSP: 20). Samuel Rutherford, forbidden to preach and exiled to Aberdeen, shows fierce independence when he writes that 'My mother hath borne me a man of contention [...] that striveth with the whole earth'.¹¹⁷ In order to show that Scottish monarchy had never been absolute and unaccountable, he simply reproduces all Buchanan's descriptions of Scottish royal accountability, from the misty days of Fergus I in 330 B.C. to the reign of Mary.¹¹⁸ Active resistance disappeared after 1688, but the independent tradition remained. It appears in a sermon preached by Robertson's father: 'when God has interposed his Authority we must obey, whatever the Consequences may be, even tho' we displease the whole world'. Robertson senior also urges his hearers to 'be not frightened from doing your Duty [...] by the Frowns of Men in Power'.¹¹⁹ Even within the Moderate context, Robertson maintained this spirit in his relations with 'great men'. It is even more noticeable in his histories, where it makes the 'cosmopolitan' or 'British' view that he condoned absolutism in the interests of order difficult to maintain. Robertson's independent attitude is confirmed by numerous church historians, and writers on Moderatism, although they differ about the significance of patronage to the

¹¹⁶ J H. Burns, *The True Law of Kingship: Concepts of Monarchy in Early-Modern Scotland*, (Oxford, 1996), pp. 127-148.

¹¹⁷ Samuel Rutherford to John Gordon of Cardoness, 1637, in *Letters of Samuel Rutherford: A Selection*, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1996).

¹¹⁸ Rutherford, *Lex, Rex*, pp. 224-227.

¹¹⁹ William Robertson Sr, *Ministers Ought to please God rather than Men: A Sermon preached at the Opening of the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, May 3rd, 1737, by Mr William Robertson, one of the Ministers of Edinburgh*, (Edinburgh, 1737), pp. 16, 41.

Moderates who supported it.¹²⁰ How this independence could exist in a government-backed party will be considered when Robertson's political commitments are discussed.

Robertson's personal commitment to Presbyterianism emerges clearly from an incident early in his career. Robertson's eldest son records that 'the high reputation which Dr Robertson acquired suggested to some of his friends the idea of his quitting Scotland and going into the Church of England'.¹²¹ A letter from Hume in London discusses this. According to Hume, Lord Mansfield felt that he 'was sure that a Prebendary would be procur'd for him [i.e., Robertson] in this Country, if [...] he would accept of it'. Hume was in favour: 'I would have you open both Ears and both Hands to such a Proposal [...] you must step at once from the one Church into the other'.¹²² Robertson's reaction is unknown, but Dugald Stewart, who knew him, writes that 'it is probable that his disapprobation was expressed in those decided terms which became the consistency and dignity of his character'.¹²³ Other biographers have speculated about the question. The Episcopalian clergyman George Gleig suggests that Robertson dismissed the idea because there was no General Assembly in the Church of England where Robertson could display his oratory.¹²⁴ Richard Davenport also notes that there was not 'any room in England for the exercise of that kind of eloquence in which he particularly excelled'.¹²⁵ This Anglican absence of debate may have affected Robertson's decision, but not necessarily because of vanity. Considering his association

¹²⁰ In chronological order: John Cunningham, *The Church History of Scotland, from the Commencement of the Christian Era to the Present Century*, 2 vols, (Edinburgh, 1859), II, pp. 550-551; William Law Mathieson, *The Awakening of Scotland: A History from 1747 to 1797*, (Glasgow, 1910), pp. 170-171 and *Church and Reform in Scotland: A History from 1797 to 1843*, (Glasgow, 1916), pp. 108-109; J.H.S Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland*, (London, 1960), p. 300; Clark, pp. 207, 209-210; Sher, *Church*, pp. 89-92, 96, 134-135.

¹²¹ R-McD, MS 3979, f. 24, NLS.

¹²² Hume to Robertson, 7/4/1759, in *New Letters*, pp. 49-50.

¹²³ Dugald Stewart, p. 34.

¹²⁴ George Gleig, *Some Account of the Life and Writings of William Robertson, D.D., F.R.S.E.*, (Edinburgh, 1812), pp. xliii-xliv.

¹²⁵ Richard Alfred Davenport, 'Sketch of the Life of Dr Robertson' in *Works of William Robertson*, 11 vols, (Chiswick, 1824), I, pp. i-lxxii (p. xl).

of oratory and liberty he may have had good cause for not joining a church in which debate played no part. Hearing the preaching of John Blair, a Scot who *had* joined the Church of England and who was one of the first to suggest that Robertson do the same,¹²⁶ Robertson pronounced him ‘a ninny of an orator’.¹²⁷ This may hint at Robertson’s opinion on the Church of England’s constitution, particularly when we recall his insistence that *good* oratory is inseparable from freedom.

This suggests that Robertson’s decision was based on a conviction that Presbyterianism was the superior form of Christianity. This appears to be confirmed by a letter from Gilbert Elliot on the subject: ‘I can only say that if the offer be large enough, and immediate, it might deserve consideration, but even a middling one I should not think worth your changing [...]for, even tho conscience were out of the question’.¹²⁸ This implies that for Robertson, conscience is important. Robertson’s views on episcopacy are relevant here, because he would have had to accept it if he entered the Church of England. Pocock believes that ‘there is language in the *History of Scotland* which might suggests a willingness to accept a modified form of episcopacy’.¹²⁹ By this, Pocock seems to refer to Robertson’s acknowledgement in *Scotland* that Knox accepted the appointment of superintendents who were ‘empowered to inspect the life and doctrine of the other clergy’. However, Robertson makes it clear that these superintendents ‘pretended no right to the dignity or revenues of the former bishops’ (S II: 43). This stresses a break with episcopacy, not continuity. William Warburton, later an Anglican Bishop himself, thought that Robertson’s history should have ‘spoken with much more freedom of the Hierarchical principles of the infant

¹²⁶ John Blair to Robertson, 27/2/1759, *R-McD* MS 3942, NLS.

¹²⁷ Brougham, p. 277.

¹²⁸ Elliot to Robertson, 23/3/1759, *R-McD*, MS 3942, f. 29, NLS.

¹²⁹ Pocock, *Barbarism*, II, p. 274.

Church of Scotland'.¹³⁰ Besides, even if Robertson condoned a *modified* form of episcopacy, this does not mean readiness to serve the full-blown episcopacy of the Church of England. Admittedly, Elliot says, presumably referring to *Scotland*, that 'you are so candid on the article of Episcopacy that I should not be surprised to hear that you had a living in your grasp'.¹³¹ Elliot, however, was a Scottish Presbyterian and perhaps unable to judge what Anglicans would find 'candid'. In fact Robertson is uncompromising on the difference in the rival forms of Christianity:

As the model of episcopal government was copied from that of the Christian church as established in the Roman empire, the situation of the primitive church, prior to its establishment by civil authority, seems to have suggested the idea and furnished the model of the [...] system which has since been denominated *Presbyterian* (S II: 41).

This makes Presbyterianism the older form of Christianity, and also implies an Erastian link between episcopacy and 'civil authority'. The system of the founders of the faith is Presbyterian. A correspondent in the *Gentleman's Magazine* attacked Robertson as someone who 'artfully insinuates to his reader that the Episcopal Hierarchy was of no higher original than the time when Christianity became the established religion of the Roman empire'. The letter goes on to argue that Christianity was always episcopal, quoting early Church historians in support.¹³²

Robertson's disdain for episcopacy is apparent in his article on Bishop Keith's *Catalogue* of Scottish Bishops in the *Edinburgh Review*. 'Those who consider an uninterrupted line of bishops down from the apostolic age to be essential to the validity of ordination, may reckon all this industry well bestowed', he writes, making it clear that he is not among this group. 'The generality of our readers we are persuaded will receive but little entertainment or instruction'. Further on, he insists that 'in Scotland,

¹³⁰ Dugald Stewart, 'Life and Writings', pp. 17-18.

¹³¹ Elliot to Robertson, 23/3/1759, *R-McD*, MS 3942, f. 29, NLS.

¹³² Letter on *Scotland*, *Gentleman's Magazine*, 31 (1761), 261-262 (pp. 261-262)

Episcopacy is rather the badge of a political faction than the distinction of a religious sect'.¹³³ This alludes to Episcopalian Jacobitism, and strips Scottish episcopacy of any non-secular inspiration. Colin Kidd sees this review as indicative of Robertson's dismantling of the Scottish past, because it rejects some of the mythology of Presbyterianism, notably the 'ancient proto-Presbyterian constitution of the Culdees'.¹³⁴ Robertson does admit that the Culdees were not ancient Presbyterians, and that 'an argument may be advanced in favour of the early introduction of Episcopal hierarchy into Scotland'. But acknowledgement of historical evidence does not imply approval of Episcopacy or a wish to belittle Presbyterianism. Admitting that early Scottish Christianity was episcopal, as in the rest of Europe, Robertson states that 'Ambition and love of power began early to infect the clergy; credulity and superstition prevailed among the people; and the same causes did not fail of producing everywhere the same effects'.¹³⁵ Episcopacy, for Robertson, has its roots in corruption.

Had Robertson entered the Church of England, he might have become a bishop himself. He almost certainly stood to gain more financially in the Church of England than he ever could in that of Scotland. However, he apparently chose God over Mammon, and his views on episcopacy suggest that his choice was due to more than vanity or political calculation.

3) Whiggery

It is anachronistic to speak of 'Whigs' before the late seventeenth century, but the ideas behind Scottish Whiggery go back to the sixteenth century and George Buchanan, and are connected with Presbyterianism. In fact 'Whigs' was originally the name given to late seventeenth-century Scottish Covenanters, after which it was applied, in hostility, to

¹³³ *Edinburgh Review*, pp. 80, 81.

¹³⁴ Kidd, 'Ideological Significance', p. 135.

English politicians who promoted Exclusion and challenged Charles II. The term ‘Whig’ both in Scotland and England is firmly associated with resistance to governmental authority from its inception.

The Scottish tradition of Whiggery differs from the English in being firmly linked with a specific type of Church polity, but also—because of its Buchananite heritage—by being more radical. Like much English ‘Whig’ theory, Buchanan’s was based on an ancient constitution which was, however, less elaborate than the one put forward in England. As Pocock says, it was ‘less a constitution than an institutionalized “liberty” or right of resistance’.¹³⁶ According to Buchanan, Scotland had always been ruled by a strictly limited monarchy, and his political treatise, the *De Jure*, uncompromisingly advocates resistance to and deposition of tyrants, and even tyrannicide by individuals.¹³⁷

Although it was supposedly an ancient Scottish constitution, it was distinctly civic humanist and classically-based, so that Scotland was seen as what Williamson calls a ‘northern Sparta’ with a ‘predominantly aristocratic character’.¹³⁸ In fact, there is nothing in Buchanan’s political treatise suggesting that the nobility are the only watchdogs of liberty, but Scottish circumstances made them so, as he illustrates in his Scottish history. The whole thing looks so classical that Robertson takes Buchanan to task for producing something ‘founded not on the maxims of feudal, but of ancient republican government’. (S I: 403). But if Robertson found Buchanan’s approach unsound, he had no quarrel with his principles.

These principles are all present in Buchanan’s ancient Scottish history. King Thereus falls into vice and tyranny and is deposed by the nobles, whom Buchanan classically calls ‘phylarchi’. King Durstus is ‘profligate and debauched’, slaughters

¹³⁵ *Edinburgh Review*, p. 83.

¹³⁶ Pocock, *Barbarism*, II, p. 263.

¹³⁷ Buchanan, *Powers*, pp. 141-145.

¹³⁸ Williamson, *National Consciousness*, p. 72.

nobles by treachery and is slain on the battlefield.¹³⁹ Buchanan carries his theory into more firmly historical areas, where it satisfactorily fits the reigns of ‘bad’ rulers like James III and Mary. Kidd emphasizes ‘the canonical significance of Buchanan for Scottish Whigs’ (*SSP*: 93), although he also insists that this Buchananite tradition was abandoned by Scottish Whig historians after the mid-eighteenth century.¹⁴⁰ Once again, it should be stressed that this abandonment can only be wholly accepted if applied to Buchanan’s historicity and approach. Whether the eighteenth century saw a complete abandonment of his principles is another question.

Civic humanist principles are not confined to Scotland, but they took a more politically radical form here, because of Buchanan’s interpretation of them, which influenced Scottish Whiggery. At the Revolution the English created a fiction that King James had *abdicated*. The Scots, with their Buchananite tradition that saw *deposition* of monarchs as acceptable, ‘declared James VII to be “forefaulted” without a hint of embarrassment’, as Kidd says (*SSP*: 21). Robertson despised the English equivocation, speaking impatiently of lawyers ‘wrangling about the abdication at the time of the settlement of the crown upon King William’.¹⁴¹

After 1688, Whiggery changed. Whigs increasingly governed Britain, and people in power are less radical than oppositions. Two sorts of Whiggery become noticeable. Pocock sums them up by saying that ‘The Old Whigs identified freedom with virtue, and located it in the past, the Modern Whigs identified it with wealth, enlightenment and progress toward the future’.¹⁴² Significantly, Pocock chooses the

¹³⁹ Buchanan, *History*, I, pp. 122-124.

¹⁴⁰ See above, p. 23.

¹⁴¹ Somerville, p. 274.

¹⁴² J.G.A. Pocock, ‘The Varieties of Whiggism from Exclusion to Exclusion to Reform: A History of Ideology and Discourse’, in *Virtue, Commerce and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century*, (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 215-310, (p. 231).

Scot Fletcher and the Englishman Defoe as representatives of the two types. Their attitudes can be found in their approach to the standing army controversy of the 1690s. Although John Robertson identifies classical republicanism as Fletcher's main guide, he also has to admit the resemblance of Fletcher's thought to Buchananite constitutionalism.¹⁴³ Fletcher insists that historically 'no monarchy was more limited nor any people more jealous of liberty than the Scots' and states that only after 1603 was 'the prerogative extended to the overthrow of our ancient constitution'.¹⁴⁴ Besides, classical republicanism and ancient constitutionalism are not incompatible; as we have seen, classical thought played a part in Buchanan's Scottish constitution.¹⁴⁵ In his militia vs. standing army discourse, Fletcher also speaks somewhat in the Buchananite mode, recalling the period when 'the constitution of the government put the sword into the hands of the subject, because the vassals depended more immediately on the barons than on the king'. Citing 'the great historian' Buchanan, he describes baronial resistance to Mary of Guise's proposal to establish a permanent force in 1555. Unfortunately, the nobility lost their martial ways through corruption by luxury caused by access to the goods of the East and the New World, giving rise to standing armies. To Fletcher, European governments with standing armies 'are changed from monarchies to tyrannies'. He wished to remove the threat posed by standing armies, and keep martial spirit alive in Scotland, although not in its original feudal form; he envisaged the establishment of permanent militia camps in England and Scotland.¹⁴⁶ Robertson also approves of the 1555 episode: 'Nothing could be more shocking to a generous and brave nobility than the entrusting to mercenary hands the defense of those territories which

¹⁴³ John Robertson, 'Andrew Fletcher's Vision of Union', in *Scotland and England*, pp. 203-225, (pp. 207-207).

¹⁴⁴ Fletcher, 'Speeches', p. 135.

¹⁴⁵ See above, pp. 69-70.

¹⁴⁶ Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, 'Discourse of Government with relation to Militias', in *Political Works*, pp. 1-32, (pp. 3-5, 10-11, 24-29).

had been acquired [...] by the blood of their ancestors' (S I: 370). The Regent's idea is rejected 'with that manly and determined boldness which is natural to a free people' (S I: 371). Hume's 'enlightened' view differs, seeing the scheme as an admirable one 'which might at once repel the inroads of foreign invaders, and check the turbulence of the Scottish nobles'.¹⁴⁷ It is this very turbulence which Robertson admires as 'manly and determined'.

The other type of Whiggery sees old constitutions as mere chaos and noble anarchy, and welcomes the corruption of the nobility's martial spirit by luxury, rather than condemning it. Military matters are best left to a standing army, which cannot become an instrument of tyranny as long as Parliament controls finance. These arguments are used by Defoe to refute Fletcher in the 1690s.¹⁴⁸

Pocock does not comment on the fact that the spokesman for 'Old' Whiggery is a Scottish opponent of incorporating Union, while his English rival was one of its greatest promoters. From the Scottish Whig standpoint, Fletcher's outlook can be called 'Scottish' and Defoe's 'British', and the Union can be seen as an abandonment of the old martial values for new commercial ones—much of the Union treaty concerns trade and related matters. Defoe's ideology contributed to the ideology of 'Court' Whigs, or Whigs in government. The older type of Whiggery tended to be found in opposition Whigs, called at various times True, Real, or Honest Whigs, whose ideology is often called 'Country' as opposed to 'Court'. This tradition, persisting into the eighteenth century (which could be appropriated by Tories opposed to 'Court' Whig governments) and discussed in chapter XIV of Pocock's major work, *The Machiavellian Moment*, also forms the core of the eighteenth-century 'Commonwealthman' tradition of Caroline

¹⁴⁷ Hume, *History*, III, p. 457.

¹⁴⁸ Daniel Defoe, 'An Argument Shewing, That a Standing Army, with Consent of Parliament, is not Inconsistent with a Free Government etc', in *The True Born Englishman and Other Writings*, ed by P.N. Furbank and W.R. Owens, (London, 1997), pp. 5-21, (pp. 13-15).

Robbins. Fletcher and Buchanan, as Robbins states, were important to the Scottish variant of the tradition.¹⁴⁹

Different concepts of liberty are represented by the different types of Whiggery. In the older sort, liberty is active and participatory—by means of arms-bearing, for example. The newer variety stresses protection *by* government (rather than possible resistance *to* it, which is always implicit in the older, active, conception), so that lives and property are secure. This was seen as appropriate for a modern, commercial age, which needs law and order above all. Citizen-soldiers being unfeasible in an age when people cannot leave their work, defense becomes the preserve of a professional standing army. Whigs in power, ‘Court’ Whigs, promoted this vision. Without denying the right of resistance—to do so would have invalidated 1688—they played it down, stressing the need for orderly society protected by authority. This ‘liberty’ is theoretically possible under absolutism, although this was not stated by Defoe or the ‘Court’ Whigs. Hume, however, with his European bias, saw it clearly:

In a civilized monarchy, the prince alone is unrestrained in the exercise of his authority, and possesses alone a power which is not bounded by any thing except custom, example and the sense of his own interest [...] thus a species of government arises to which, in a high political rant we may give the name of Tyranny, but which, by a just and prudent administration may afford tolerable security to the people.¹⁵⁰

Hume’s emphasis is on freedom *from*—what John Robertson calls the ‘jurisprudential’ concept of liberty, rather than freedom *to*, the ‘civic humanist’ participatory model of liberty which is associated by John Robertson with Fletcher.¹⁵¹ In suggesting that absolutism is not necessarily despotic tyranny, Hume, rather than Robertson, shows

¹⁴⁹ J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, (Princeton and London, 1975), esp. pp. 466–467, 493–503; Caroline Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman: Studies in the Transmission, Development and Circumstance of English Liberal Thought from the Restoration of Charles II until the War with the Thirteen Colonies*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), pp. 177–182.

¹⁵⁰ Hume, ‘Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences’, in *Essays*, pp. 111–137, (p. 125).

¹⁵¹ John Robertson, ‘The Scottish Enlightenment at the Limits of the Civic Tradition’, in *Wealth and Virtue*, pp. 137–178, (pp. 140, 175).

ideological links to Montesquieu. Montesquieu divides governments into republics, monarchies and despotisms. By 'monarchy', however, he does not mean a limited, British monarchy. For Montesquieu, the British system, however admirable, is an exceptional case, inherently unstable and destined to 'perish when legislative power is more corrupt than executive power'. What Montesquieu calls 'the monarchies we know', are absolute; they 'do not have liberty for their direct purpose [...] they aim only for the glory of the citizens, the state and the prince'. Nonetheless, 'this glory results in a spirit of liberty than can [...] perhaps contribute as much to happiness as liberty itself'.¹⁵² The distinction between absolutism and despotism, and the belief that absolutism can be beneficial, are, as we shall see, not found in Robertson's thought.

Scottish Whiggery seems to have swallowed the passive variety of liberty with the Union. Exchanging a Parliament for trade advantages, Scotland appears to turn its back on the 'Scottish' autonomous values associated with Fletcher or Buchanan, and embrace 'British' commercial and 'polite' ones. It is often assumed that the eighteenth-century Scottish literati were 'Modern' Whigs. Pocock, sees post-Union Scots moving from a 'civic' to a 'civil' view of society, and 'taking up Addisonian politeness as a substitute for Fletcherian patriotism' in the process.¹⁵³ Taking as a representative group Robertson, Millar, Smith and Ferguson, Pocock states that 'the weight of Scottish argument is [...] wholly on the side of Defoe'.¹⁵⁴ This again shows misunderstanding caused by judgement based on the 'giants' of Scottish thought. Of Pocock's group, Smith is 'wholly on the side of Defoe', but Ferguson and Robertson are another matter, and there is, in their outlook, at least a tension between 'Old' and

¹⁵² Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, ed. and trans. by Anne Cohler et al., (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 10, 156-166, 166.

¹⁵³ J.G.A. Pocock, 'Cambridge Paradigms and Scotch Philosophers: A Study of the Relations between the Civic Humanist and Civil Jurisprudential Interpretation of Eighteenth-Century Social Thought', in *Wealth and Virtue*, pp. 235-252, (pp. 240-241); *Varieties*, p. 253.

¹⁵⁴ Pocock, *Varieties*, p. 253.

'Modern' views. Pocock himself notices this when he considers Ferguson in *The Machiavellian Moment*, and, even after claiming that Scottish Whigs were with Defoe, he admits that 'the claims of [...] military and civic autonomy continued to be heard; there were controversies over the militia and the authenticity of Ossian'.¹⁵⁵ This tension was not new. Fletcher, the voice of martial virtue, also supported the Darien scheme to make Scotland effective commercially. In trying (during the militia agitations) to maintain a 'Scottish' tradition of martial independence in a 'British' commercial post-Union age, Robertson and others faced an old problem.

In calling the Moderates 'Whig-Presbyterian conservatives' who were 'eager to defend established institutions', Richard Sher is misleading. According to Sher, Scottish 'Whig-Presbyterian conservatives' were unquestioningly loyal to the Revolution, the Union, and the Hanoverian Succession.¹⁵⁶ Robertson's loyalty to the Revolution is indubitable—it freed Scotland and its Parliament.¹⁵⁷ His view of the Union, as I have tried to show, is more complex. Regarding loyalty to the Hanovers, there is room for question. If all Sher means is that Robertson preferred them to the Stuarts, then he is right. In 1745, Robertson volunteered to fight the Jacobites, and later tried to join Sir John Cope's forces. He was prepared to fight *against* Stuart, but it does not follow that he was fighting *for* Hanover, or out of a dislike of rebellion *per se*. Robertson told the Jacobite Lord Elibank, shortly after 1745, that he 'did not think worse of a man's moral character for his having been in rebellion'.¹⁵⁸ Alexander Bower calls Robertson 'zealously attached to the present royal family', but this is a nineteenth-century view.¹⁵⁹ Dugald Stewart is closer when he says that Robertson's attitude showed 'zeal for the

¹⁵⁵ Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 499-502; 'Varieties', p. 253

¹⁵⁶ Sher, *Church*, p. 17.

¹⁵⁷ See above, pp. 51-52.

¹⁵⁸ Boswell, *Tour*, p. 426.

¹⁵⁹ Alexander Bower, *History of the University of Edinburgh*, 3 vols, (Edinburgh, 1817-1830), III, p. 40.

civil and religious liberties of his country', particularly as 'his country' is not defined.¹⁶⁰ Robertson defended 'civil and religious liberties', not a German king in London, or the principle of authority. The early Hanovers never inspired, in Whigs, the devotion that the Stuarts did in Jacobites. This was particularly so in Scotland, where patriotism and dislike of the Union meant that even some Scottish Whigs could never be wholly relied upon to support the Hanovers.¹⁶¹ Their appeal to Whigs and Presbyterians seems to have been largely negative: they were not Catholic and they did not have Stuart absolutist pretensions. The Presbyterian General Assembly's 'Warning and Exhortation' in 1745 says little about George II, but speaks against 'setting a Popish pretender on the throne, educated in all the maxims of Popish superstition and French tyranny', thus urging resistance to foreign-backed Catholic despotism.¹⁶² These Whig and Presbyterian concerns are evident throughout Robertson's histories, and are present in his 1755 sermon to the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge. The function of the SSPCK was the Presbyterianizing of the Highlands. Robertson's description of the Highlands as a place where 'society still appears in its rudest and most imperfect form' (XA: cxxiv), is compatible with the picture of Robertson as a doctrinaire advocate of material progress, but it is not the 'rudeness' itself to which Robertson objects. It is what it allows that matters: 'In this neglected field, the enemies of our religion and liberty have sown the seeds of the worst superstition and the most pernicious principles of government' (XA: cxxiv). This danger of Jacobite agents spreading principles of Popery and indefeasible hereditary Stuart absolutism is, for Robertson, the reason for the work of the SSPCK.

¹⁶⁰ Dugald Stewart, 'Life and Writings', p. 8.

¹⁶¹ Murray G.H. Pittock, *Jacobitism*, (Basingstoke, 1998), p. 38.

¹⁶² *Annals of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*, ed. by Nathaniel Morren, 2 vols, (Edinburgh, 1838-1840), I, pp. 75-76, 81.

Robertson's readiness to bear arms fits with the general 'Scottish' civic humanist emphasis on arms and liberty (as well as the militant traditions of Presbyterianism), and again raises the militia issue and Robertson's views on standing armies. According to Sher, the militia agitation shows the 'conservatism' of the Moderates, who were 'insistent on limiting their definition of public virtue to support for the status quo'.¹⁶³ But how can trying to create a new institution can be construed as maintaining a status quo—especially when the managers of the status quo in London oppose the idea? The status quo of the eighteenth century was 'British', commercial and 'polite', while the Moderates appealed to older 'Scottish' traditions of martial virtue. In so doing, they resembled, as John Robertson says, earlier anti-Union Scots who 'put the values of the martial past before the prospect of future wealth'.¹⁶⁴ In this sense the Moderates *are* conservative, but they went against the prevailing status quo in being so.

The militia debate had changed since Fletcher's day in no longer being an either/or argument. Eighteenth-century militia agitation ostensibly proposed a militia *and* a standing army. Writing to Townshend, Robertson combines martial spirit with loyalism: 'the great bulk of our people [...] desire to repel the insults of the enemy, and if they shall be entrusted with arms, we are persuaded they will employ them in defense of his [i.e., the King's] person and government'.¹⁶⁵ Advocacy of militia here is apparently not grounded in suspicion of monarchical despotism. Examination of the militia pamphlet with which Robertson was most involved—Carlyle's of 1760—suggests, though, that this 'Old' Whig concern had not vanished. John Robertson notes that the pamphlet refers to Fletcher, but also that Fletcher is inappropriate to Carlyle's

¹⁶³ Sher, *Church*, p. 240.

¹⁶⁴ John Robertson, *Militia Issue*, p. 241.

¹⁶⁵ Robertson to Townshend, 25/10/1759, *Charles Townshend Papers*, Bundle 295/3/21, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.

ostensible argument.¹⁶⁶ The logical question is what Fletcher is doing there at all. O'Brien allows Fletcher some influence over Robertson's thought (*NE*: 105-106), and admits that Fletcher's belief in 'the abhorrent nature of standing armies' was used in eighteenth-century militia agitation. This contradicts her belief that Robertson 'welcomed the advent of absolute monarchies in the early modern period'.¹⁶⁷ It is hard to hate standing armies *and* favour absolutism, and O'Brien admits that Robertson, in his histories, 'rails against the growth of standing armies and the decline of militias', qualifying this by saying that he accepted it as an inevitable part of progress (*NE*: 110). If this is so, why did Robertson agitate for militia? By O'Brien's reckoning, he should have seen militia as anachronistic, as genuinely 'cosmopolitan' or 'British' writers did. Gibbon mourns the decline of Roman citizen-soldiery, but is scathing about English militia.¹⁶⁸ Smith provides a long argument grounded in 'stadial' history, showing that militia is inappropriate to commercial society.¹⁶⁹ Hume advocated militia, but only in a Utopia.¹⁷⁰

Carlyle's pamphlet considers 'the friends of liberty who have [...] spoke upon this subject'. These men 'had seen almost all other nations enslaved by mercenary forces' and 'their writings abound in proofs of the fatal effects of standing armies' which 'have always become tools for the establishment of despotism'. Furthermore, 'these great men had reason as well as facts upon their side. It is impossible to find a prince who became absolute without a standing army, and no sound argument can be

¹⁶⁶ John Robertson, *Militia Issue*, pp. 102-104.

¹⁶⁷ Karen O'Brien, 'Robertson's place in the Development of Eighteenth-Century Narrative History', in *Expansion of Empire*, pp. 74-91, (pp. 80-81).

¹⁶⁸ Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 3 vols, ed. by David Womersley, (London, 1995), I, pp. 38-39; *Memoirs of My Life*, ed. by Betty Radice, (London, 1990), pp. 123-124.

¹⁶⁹ Smith, *Wealth*, II, pp. 689-708.

¹⁷⁰ Hume, 'Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth', in *Essays*, pp. 513-529, (pp. 520-521).

brought against entrusting the people in free governments with arms'.¹⁷¹ The language is hardly favourable to standing armies. Carlyle then describes arguments used for a standing army—the Jacobite threat, French power—and is critical of their acceptance: 'our eager pursuit of trade, together with the softness that luxury induces [...] have been our motives for yielding to these reasons'. He then shows that these arguments actually justify a *militia*. After all this, there is a sudden about-turn: 'it is not my design to invalidate the reasons for a standing army', says Carlyle who has used the five preceding pages to do just that.¹⁷² John Dwyer gives a prominent place to civic humanist discourse in eighteenth-century Scotland, but suggests that the Moderates 'were never overly concerned about the dangers inherent in a standing army'.¹⁷³ If this is the case, why does Carlyle revive old arguments? The rhetorical gear-change that follows them, as of someone calling himself to order, suggests that old issues were still important, but had to be played down if government support was to be won.

Robertson's views on standing armies are clear in *Scotland*, when he speaks of 'Conquerors, whom mercenary armies, under our present form of government often render the tyrants of their people as well as the scourges of mankind' (S I: 226). This shows both dislike of standing armies as instruments of internal repression, and the 'Scottish' distrust of conquest which emerges more fully in Robertson's later works. These views differ from those of the 'British' Smith, who favours a standing army because 'it is only by means of it, that a barbarous country can be suddenly and tolerably civilized'.¹⁷⁴ He also claims that a standing army allows internal liberty:

liberty which approaches to licentiousness can be tolerated only in countries where the sovereign is served by a well-regulated standing army. It is in such countries only that the publick safety does not require

¹⁷¹ [Carlyle], *Question*, pp. 11-12

¹⁷² [Carlyle], *Question*, pp. 12, 13, 14-16, 17.

¹⁷³ John Dwyer, *Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, (Edinburgh, 1987), pp. 39-46, esp. p. 45.

¹⁷⁴ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, p. 706.

that the sovereign should be trusted with any discretionary power for suppressing even [...] this licentious liberty'.¹⁷⁵

Robertson dislikes standing armies because they can be used for imperial purposes and internal repression; Smith likes them for the same reason. The unstated message in his argument is that a king with an army can tolerate a certain amount of 'licentiousness' because he can easily suppress it. Smith and Robertson provide excellent examples of the differing views of liberty presented by 'Old' and 'Modern' Whigs. As John Robertson says, Smith's arguments are in the 'Court' Whig mode, although he also shows that Smith was less chauvinistic than the 'Court' Whigs in seeing, like Hume, good in the 'civilized monarchies' of Europe.¹⁷⁶ O'Brien suggests that Robertson also admired absolutism, notably that of Louis XIV (*NE*: 100). In fact, the *Edinburgh Review* article on which this assumption is based shows that Robertson's admiration is limited to a special context. The article deals with Louis's relations with Rome, and it clearly reveals Robertson's opinion of Catholicism. Louis, he says, 'is known to have been sufficiently devout. But even devotion and bigotry itself could not make him submit the majesty of a prince to that power to which he had already sacrificed the reason of a man'. He is commended as 'the first prince who deliberately [...] obliged the see of Rome to stoop to his authority'.¹⁷⁷ Robertson is prepared to countenance royal absolutism when used against the Pope. This does not imply approval of absolutism as a form of internal government. This is confirmed by his enthusiasm for the French Revolution; he 'Could not Listen to the Ravings of Burke' against it.¹⁷⁸ Robertson's attitude to the French Revolution suggests strong Whig principles, and David Craig

¹⁷⁵ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, p. 707.

¹⁷⁶ John Robertson, *Militia Issue*, p. 219.

¹⁷⁷ *Edinburgh Review*, pp. 83-87, (p. 82).

¹⁷⁸ Carlyle, *Anecdotes*, p. 281.

misses the point in dismissing it as 'Wordsworthian enthusiasm'.¹⁷⁹ When the Revolution broke out, Wordsworth was at an age when people incline to radical causes; in later life, he became conservative. Robertson, however, was in his late sixties in 1789, when people tend to condemn revolutions rather than support them. Welcoming a revolution in old age argues deeply ingrained Whig convictions. David Craig's statement that Robertson 'exploited the worst side of the anti-Revolution atmosphere for Church ends', that is, to support patronage, is untrue. Even the authorities which Craig cites in evidence do not confirm it.¹⁸⁰

Robertson's convictions are confirmed by his 1788 Revolution sermon, in which Robertson refers to European affairs. Sher calls the sermon 'a triumph of the cosmopolitan ideal over "vulgar" Whiggism'.¹⁸¹ 'Vulgar' Whiggism is defined by Pocock as that which 'confused Bourbon absolutism with despotism and upheld belief in an ancient constitution'.¹⁸² Sher admits, however, that the sermon is open to a 'vulgar' Whig reading.¹⁸³ It is also open to a 'Scottish' Whig reading because it mentions the earliest 'Whigs'—the late seventeenth century Covenanters—favourably.¹⁸⁴ It is not a conservative sermon. Robertson's son Lord Robertson refused to publish it after his father's death 'because the author would be set down for a Jacobin'.¹⁸⁵ Even allowing for the atmosphere of the 1790's, this is a strong statement to make about a supposed mainstay of government.

¹⁷⁹ David Craig, *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People, 1680-1830*, (London, 1961), p. 69.

¹⁸⁰ Craig, *Scottish Literature*, p. 69. Craig cites Mathieson, *Church and Reform*, p. 13, and Henry Meikle, *Scotland and the French Revolution*, (Glasgow, 1912), pp. 39-40. Mathieson, on p. 13, actually points out that Robertson welcomed the French Revolution and disagreed with Burke, while the pages cited in Meikle refer to a dispute in the early 1780's, before the French Revolution.

¹⁸¹ Richard B. Sher, '1688 and 1788: William Robertson on Revolution in Britain and France', in *Culture and Revolution*, ed. by Paul Dukes and John Dunkley, (London and New York, 1990), pp. 98-109, (p. 102).

¹⁸² Pocock, 'Varieties', p. 251.

¹⁸³ Sher, '1688 and 1788', p. 101.

¹⁸⁴ See above, p. 59.

¹⁸⁵ Brougham, 'Robertson', p. 251.

The sermon discusses why government was established: 'It was not to gratify the caprice of those who bear rule over them, to indulge their passions, to extend their fame or their power, that men first associate together'. This was forgotten due to an 'obsequious spirit' which made people believe that government 'was formed not for the benefit of the many but of the few, for the good of those who govern rather than of those who are governed. Monarchs were supposed to possess unlimited power'.¹⁸⁶ This view of government echoes Buchanan: 'you have strayed into error in thinking people and nations desired to have governments not for the maintenance of right, but that kings might enjoy themselves'.¹⁸⁷

The Stuart period, for Robertson, is one of darkness, in which 'the servile maxims I have mentioned were generally adopted'. After the Revolution, 'the Sceptre was placed in the hands of Sovereigns who had no title to sway it but what they derived from the people'.¹⁸⁸ This again recalls Buchanan: 'the people confer the political authority on whomsoever they wish'.¹⁸⁹ Robertson does not mention that post-Revolution monarchs have any hereditary claim to the throne; like Buchanan, he sees their authority as derived from 'the people' alone. This is not to suggest that Robertson's sermon is influenced wholly by Buchanan, only that there is evidence in it of the older 'Scottish' Whig-Presbyterian view to which Buchanan so strongly contributed. This is similar to the sort doctrine that the conservative Whig Burke attacked when Richard Price suggested that people have a right 'to choose their own governors' and that British monarchs held the throne by the people's choice. Burke stresses hereditary right, insisting 1688 saw only 'a small and a temporary deviation

¹⁸⁶ Robertson, 'Revolution', pp. 176, 177.

¹⁸⁷ Buchanan, *Powers*, p. 59.

¹⁸⁸ Robertson, 'Revolution', p. 178.

¹⁸⁹ Buchanan, *Powers*, p. 52.

from the strict order of a regular hereditary succession'.¹⁹⁰ There were fundamental differences between Robertson and Burke over the nature of Whiggery. Discussing the 1710 Sacheverel trial, Robertson thought that 'the Whig principles were imperfectly brought out in the course of that trial'.¹⁹¹ To Burke in 1791, however, the trial had served 'to confirm and fix Whig principles [...] in the extent and with the limitations with which it was meant they should be understood by posterity'. Burke, determined to show that the French Revolution was *not* in harmony with Whig principles, had good reason to choose the Sacheverel trial as the epitome of those principles, rather than the 1688 Revolution itself. The Whigs of 1710 were Whigs in office. It is unsurprising to find them 'affirming the doctrine of non-resistance to government to be the general, moral, religious and political rule for the subject, and justifying the revolution on the same principle with Mr Burke [...] as an exception from necessity'.¹⁹² 1688 was a one-off, not a precedent. Burke emphasizes this in his *Reflections*, saying that the view of 1688 taken by Price and company saw only 'the deviation from the constitution, and they take the deviation from the principle for the principle'.¹⁹³ If Robertson found the Whig principles of the Sacheverel trial 'imperfectly brought out', then it is likely that he preferred a stronger interpretation. This seems to be confirmed in the 1788 sermon, which describes the 'concurring voice' of the people as 'a formidable restraint upon the exercise of power, warning Kings and their Ministers how dangerous it is to run counter to the general sentiment of the people'.¹⁹⁴ Written in the present tense, this hints that 1688 could happen again if government misbehaves.

¹⁹⁰ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. by Conor Cruise O'Brien, (London, 1986), pp. 96-111, esp. pp. 96, 99, 101.

¹⁹¹ Somerville, p. 274.

¹⁹² Edmund Burke, 'Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs', in *Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, 12 vols, (London, 1808), VI, pp. 69-267, (pp. 145, 154).

¹⁹³ Burke, *Reflections*, p. 107.

¹⁹⁴ Robertson, 'Revolution', p. 179.

The sermon also considers Europe where 'we see men claiming rights and privileges of which they were not formerly conscious and to which they did not pretend to aspire'. Robertson sees 'their bold efforts in asserting their freedom' as admirable.¹⁹⁵ In 1788, largely due to pressure from the French nobility, Louis XVI agreed to summon the states-general for the first time since the early seventeenth century; and this led to the French Revolution. Sher links Robertson's view of these events to his approval of Montesquieu's conception of a monarchy without constitutional restraints, but bounded by the 'honorific privileges' of the nobility.¹⁹⁶ Robertson does write favourably of this idea, in the *Progress of Society* introduction, citing Montesquieu in support (C I: 160). However, the French nobles of 1788 called for the states-general, a vaguely Parliamentary institution which, as Robertson also points out, had been abandoned by increasingly absolute monarchs. During the reign of Francis I, for example, 'the states-general of France were not once assembled, nor were the people allowed to exert the power of taxing themselves' (C I: 159). The nobility of 1688 went beyond 'honorific' limitations in forcing the King to revive an institution which French kings had deliberately allowed to fall into disuse. States-general would make the French absolute monarchy less absolute. This is not in tune with Montesquieu, who is content that it *should* be absolute. Although allowing for 'intermediate, subordinate and dependent powers', he is still firm that 'in a monarchy, the prince is the source of all political and civil power'. The only limitation Montesquieu allows is a vague notion of honour: 'In monarchical and moderate states, power is limited by [...] honour, which reigns like a monarch over prince and people'. Furthermore, Montesquieu insists that 'there is nothing in monarchy that honour prescribes so much as obedience to the wills of the prince, but this honour dictates to us that the prince should never prescribe an action

¹⁹⁵ Robertson 'Revolution', pp. 183, 184.

¹⁹⁶ Sher, '1688 and 1788', p. 104.

that dishonours us, because it would make us incapable of serving him'.¹⁹⁷ Much plainly depends on the prince's own sense of honour. Montesquieu acknowledges that subjects can be made incapable of service to him, but this has a passive sound. There is nothing to suggest that subjects can *force* the prince to be honourable.

Montesquieu's vision of monarchy is fundamentally absolutist. Robertson, on the other hand, dislikes the *ancien regime* states: 'in every kingdom on the Continent, the dominion of the Monarch [...] has been established in full extent, and is upheld by the hand of power and the terror of mercenary armies'.¹⁹⁸ These are the beliefs of Fletcher.¹⁹⁹ There is no trace of the Humean view that absolutism is not necessarily tyranny. Montesquieu saw monarchies as governed by honour and despotisms by fear.²⁰⁰ Robertson clearly sees the continental 'monarchies' as governed by fear. In Montesquieu's terms, therefore, he sees them as despotic. 'Old' or 'vulgar' Whig hostility to foreign absolutism and standing armies is still firmly in place.

It is true that Robertson, at the end of his life, turned against the French Revolution. In 1793, he described John Drysdale's conservative sermon 'On the Distinction of Ranks' as a 'useful antidote' against 'the wild tenets of the present day'.²⁰¹ If Robertson turned against the Revolution it was probably because by 1793 it had gone beyond anything Robertson was familiar with in 'Scottish' Whig tradition. Leadership in France had passed from what he would regard as the proper leaders of resistance to what he probably saw as a rabble. Furthermore, what had first looked like an attack on the power of Popery in France, had, by 1793, become an attack on all religion. Robertson, as I have tried to show, never approved of *philosophe* irreligion.

¹⁹⁷ Montesquieu, *Spirit*, pp. 17, 30, 33

¹⁹⁸ Robertson, 'Revolution', p. 186.

¹⁹⁹ See above, pp. 70-71.

²⁰⁰ Montesquieu, *Spirit*, pp. 26, 28.

²⁰¹ Robertson to John Douglas, 15/2/1793, *Egerton Manuscripts*, Eg 2182, f. 28, BL.

‘While he was wishing well to liberty in France’ writes his grand-nephew, ‘he was deploring the irreligious tone of French literature’²⁰²

Few people questioned Robertson’s Whiggery. He told Horace Walpole that ‘he himself had been born and bred a Whig, though he owned he was *now* a moderate one’. Walpole’s private comment on this was ‘I should say a very moderate one’. That the leader of the Moderate party should call himself moderate is unsurprising; besides, no politician calls himself *immoderate*. Walpole’s scepticism about Robertson’s Whig credentials is founded in a belief that Robertson was insufficiently respectful of William II and III, whom Walpole idolized. He told Robertson that ‘I look on him as the greatest man of modern times’.²⁰³ Robertson’s admiration for William is rather thin. The 1788 sermon mentions him only briefly as ‘that illustrious Deliverer’, and the brief discussion of the Revolution in *Scotland* does not mention him at all (*S* III: 191-192, 199).²⁰⁴ Robertson’s coolness about William could be patriotic in origin. William regarded Scotland as a mere source of supply for his Continental wars, which was intensely resented by Scots like Fletcher.²⁰⁵ Robertson’s attitude could reflect this historical resentment, and, as even Fletcher disliked William, it need not cast doubt on his Whig convictions.

Sher suggests that Robertson had similar views on government to the Tory Johnson. This is founded on a conversation recalled by Boswell, at which Robertson and Hugh Blair apparently ‘talked well upon subordination and government’, for which Johnson later praised them.²⁰⁶ This is rather slight evidence, particularly as Boswell could not recall any more of the conversation. Neither could Blair, when Boswell asked

²⁰² Brougham, ‘Robertson’, p. 315.

²⁰³ Walpole to William Mason, April 1778, in *Walpole’s Correspondence*, XXVIII, p. 387.

²⁰⁴ Robertson, ‘Revolution’, p. 178.

²⁰⁵ Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, ‘Two Discourses concerning the Affairs of Scotland’, in *Political Works*, pp 34-81 (pp. 40, 45).

²⁰⁶ Sher, ‘Scottish Divines’, p. 45; Boswell, *Tour*, p. 429.

him.²⁰⁷ Even if Boswell's recollection is accurate, Robertson might not have been expressing his true beliefs. Gleig's biography notices Robertson's 'facility in adapting his conversation to the taste of those who were with him'.²⁰⁸ With someone like Johnson this was probably wise. When another Scot mentioned the necessity of checking the power of the Crown, Johnson promptly called him a 'vile Whig'.²⁰⁹ Both Johnson and Boswell noticed that Robertson avoided open confrontation in conversation.²¹⁰

Evidence then suggests that Robertson retained a strong allegiance to 'Scottish' Whig values, which is not compatible with the view taken by many authorities. However, such 'Scottish' values are often ambivalently expressed in Robertson's works, and the reasons for this ambivalence must now be examined to give a fuller picture.

²⁰⁷ Boswell, *Tour*, p. 429.

²⁰⁸ Gleig, p. lxxix.

²⁰⁹ Boswell, *Johnson*, II, p. 424.

²¹⁰ Boswell, *Tour*, pp. 411–412.

CHAPTER III

Acquired Contexts

1) Politics

Had Robertson's histories been straightforwardly patriotic, Whig and Presbyterian-Protestant, he would be easy to evaluate. However, his works have an appearance of equivocation, and a possible understanding of this may be found by considering the contexts in which he belonged, as it were, by acquisition, rather than by tradition. These are his political role as leader of the Moderate party, and his membership in a 'polite' literary world in which he was anxious for success.

As I noted above, Presbyterianism had to change in its identity after 1688.¹ William II and III probably wished to keep the episcopal system in Scotland, but the Jacobitism of the Scottish bishops made this impossible, and government had to accept Presbyterianism in Scotland. Because of its oppositional history, however, it was regarded with official suspicion, as Kidd says (*SSP* : 51-52). Faced with this, the Kirk tried to make itself more acceptable to government, while simultaneously, government tried to curb the Kirk. The fears of Presbyterians about the Union's effects on their church were confirmed by the 1712 Patronage Act, imposed by a High Tory government to bring the Kirk under the control of the 'right' sort—aristocrats and landowners. The Toleration Act (1712), granting relief to Episcopalians, was another blow, as was its associated requirement regarding the Oath of Allegiance, which effectively required Presbyterians to swear an oath requiring the monarch to be Anglican. This issue had been resolved for the mainstream Kirk by Robertson's day, but patronage continued to bedevil church politics. Robertson and the Moderates took their stand on support for patronage, and so are often seen as unequivocal supporters of

¹ See above, pp. 53-54.

government and ‘great men’. The first half of the eighteenth century saw the Kirk and its General Assembly controlled by clerical ‘managers’ for political masters—Patrick Cuming for the Argyll interest, and Robert Wallace when the Squadrone was in power. Patronage provoked continued conflict, leading to the Secession of 1733. The Kirk ‘managers’ adopted compromises when confronted by refusals to induct patron-presented ministers, and, in Sher’s words, ‘the authority of the general assembly over its own presbyteries sank lower and lower’ in the first part of the century.² It was this authority that Robertson, who saw it as central to Presbyterianism, sought to restore, and this led him to throw his weight behind patronage and authority.

The early eighteenth century also saw an outburst of emotional evangelicalism, manifest in the Cambuslang ‘Wark’ or Awakening of 1742. Many ministers who later became prominent High-Flyers were involved in this evangelicalism, enthusiastically welcoming George Whitefield to Scotland in the 1740’s. John Erskine ‘zealously defended the character of Mr Whitefield’, while Robertson ‘maintained a very different opinion, both of his character [...] and of the extraordinary effects imputed to his public ministration’.³ Evangelically inclined ministers sometimes claimed to be following traditional Presbyterianism, but this was not the case. Whitefield may have been Calvinist, but, as Mathieson points out, he ‘was not a Presbyterian [...] but an Anglican priest’.⁴ The most hard-line Presbyterians—Seceders and Cameronians—vehemently attacked the Cambuslang Wark.⁵ Robertson’s view regarding Whitefield’s type of religion is hinted at by his objection at being once taken by an Englishman for a Methodist.⁶ His suspicion of its effects was not ill founded; it could certainly have

² Sher, *Church*, p. 50.

³ Moncreiff-Wellwood, pp. 99.

⁴ Mathieson, *Awakening*, p. 229.

⁵ Burleigh, *Church History*, p. 293.

⁶ Carlyle, *Anecdotes*, p. 177.

weakened the already debilitated power of the Kirk in Scotland; as Ned Landsman says, 'the evangelical laity would insulate itself from the rigors of a clerical dominion that had long been based on the enforcement of doctrinal regularity'. Erskine himself soon realized the danger and 'warned just a few years later of the dangers of "Methodism and enthusiasm"'.⁷ Robertson's commitment to 'doctrinal regularity', evident in his attitude to the Westminster Confession, makes it unsurprising that he was suspicious of evangelicalism.

It was this situation, of a weakened, 'managed' Kirk and a feeble General Assembly, that Robertson and his fellow Moderates attacked. Their programme was first set out in the *Reasons of Dissent* of 1752. This relates ostensibly to a patronage case: the Presbytery of Dumfermline had refused to induct a minister, presented by the local patron, to the parish of Inverkeithing, and the General Assembly's response had been lax. However, patronage is not the central issue in the *Reasons*.

There are seventeen signatures to the *Reasons*, but it is 'agreed that Robertson had the greatest share' in the work.⁸ Its main concern is the authority of the General Assembly, which it insists is central to Presbyterianism. There is nothing innovative about it, for all that the Moderates supposedly represent a 'new' development. This is plain from its preamble: 'The Doctrine contained in the following Reasons [...] concerning the subordination of Courts and the Obedience that is due by them to the Supreme, has always been the Doctrine peculiar to our Ecclesiastical Constitution'.⁹

The document begins by stating the importance of subordination generally: the authority of 'those with whom the Society has consented to entrust the legislative

⁷ Ned C. Landsman, 'Presbyterians and Provincial Society: The Evangelical Enlightenment in the West of Scotland, 1740-1775', in *Sociability and Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, ed. by John Dwyer and Richard B. Sher, (Edinburgh, 1993), pp. 194-209, (pp. 198, 200).

⁸ Smitten, 'Introduction', p. xix.

⁹ Robertson, 'Reasons', p. 25

Power' must 'necessarily be absolute and final'.¹⁰ The implication is that patronage was established by law in 1712, and that the law must be obeyed regardless of private sentiment. This has led writers on the Moderates to see them as holding 'a belief in the over-riding importance of social order, discipline and subordination' generally.¹¹ However, this general 'law and order' statement covers barely two pages, and the document soon gets down to what Robertson plainly feels is the important issue: Presbyterian tradition and General Assembly authority. To Robertson, it is vital that the Kirk be united: 'A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand'. Presbyteries insisting that liberty of conscience is more important than Assembly authority are not behaving like Presbyterians but espousing 'the most extravagant maxims of Independency', a form of church government historically opposed to Presbyterianism. The leniency of the Assembly regarding the behaviour of the Dumfermline Presbytery is entirely 'inconsistent with Presbyterian church government'. Presbyterian government is 'of all others the most consistent with the natural Freedom and Equality of her Members', but parity of ministers is balanced by the hierarchy of church courts; if General Assembly authority 'may be disputed by inferior Courts with Impunity, we apprehend the Presbyterian Constitution to be entirely overturned'. Robertson backs himself with history: 'About an hundred years ago, the same anti-Constitutional Maxims [...] were brought into this Kingdom by the *English* sectaries'. Approvingly, Robertson quotes the pronouncement of the General Assembly of 1647, when it decreed that steps be taken 'for vindicating the Truth against the dangerous *Tenets* of Erastianism and Independency, falsely called Liberty of Conscience'.¹²

By stressing the Englishness of the false maxims, Robertson again identifies

¹⁰ Robertson, 'Reasons', p. 31.

¹¹ Smitten, 'Introduction', p. xix.

¹² Robertson, 'Reasons', pp. 33, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40.

Presbyterianism with Scottish patriotism. That he recalls criticism of Erastianism as well as Independency casts some doubt on the notion of Robertson as wholehearted advocate of government authority. Robertson chooses his precedent from the mid-seventeenth century, an era 'justly called the *pure and reforming* age of our Church'.¹³ This was when Covenanters were at the height of their power. There is no indication here of a desire to shed Presbyterian past or principles. Even Hetherington admits that 'the constitution of the Presbyterian Church requires the submission of the inferior to the superior courts', or 'the Church of Scotland must sink into the Independent system'.¹⁴ Robertson and the Moderates draw clear lines between Presbyterianism and its historical English enemy, Independency. It is significant that one of the reasons for the deposition of the minister Thomas Gillespie, the founder of the breakaway Relief Church, as a result of the Inverkeithing affair, was that he had been ordained by English Independents.¹⁵

The 'Reasons' contain the plan of the Moderate compromise with government. The mention of the necessity for obeying the law appealed to 'great men' in government, who would see in the Moderates allies in supporting their measures and backing patronage. The statement about government authority was risky; it left Robertson open to charges of supporting absolutist principles, which were made in the High-Flyers' response to the 'Reasons'.¹⁶ However, Robertson, as I have tried to show, retained a commitment to 'Old', 'Scottish' Whig values which makes it unlikely that he really supported such principles. His commitment to Presbyterian principles is very clear, however, and, judging by the 'Reasons', it was the integrity of Presbyterian Church government that was his pressing concern.

¹³ Robertson, 'Reasons', p. 41.

¹⁴ Hetherington, p. 663.

¹⁵ Mathieson, *Awakening*, p. 156.

¹⁶ *Annals*, I, pp. 243-249.

Moderate interest in maintaining Assembly authority coincided with government interest in seeing patronage enforced, and this led to an alliance. The result was the ascendancy of Robertson's party, which, however, maintained an independence which had not been the case in the early eighteenth century. This was strengthened when the government 'manager' Patrick Cuming broke with the Moderates over the *Douglas* issue. From then on, as Sher briefly notes, 'the Moderate Party would be more independent [...] less slavishly tied to the Duke of Argyll', who was, in the 1750's, still 'managing' Scotland.¹⁷ As Michael Fry points out, Robertson and his group 'were never happy with Cuming' in any case. He was too servile to government, and the Moderates 'wanted to restore a Kirk equal, not subordinate, to the state'.¹⁸

This was the essence of the Moderate compromise. As Clark says, the Moderates 'consulted with government; but they were not prepared to tolerate open meddling by Ministers of State'.¹⁹ The Moderates ensured support for government in the Assembly and kept up the cause of patronage there. In return, under Robertson's leadership, they insisted on clerical autonomy. It was a delicate balance, and in many ways dependent on the weakness or forbearance of the secular power. That this power eventually grew too strong for Robertson has been suggested by Clark, who attributes his retirement in 1780 to 'his refusal to accept a secondary role to Henry Dundas, who was establishing a political ascendancy in Scotland'.²⁰ There is evidence for disagreement between Dundas and Robertson, but this is unclear. An early nineteenth-century biography of Robertson's fellow-Moderate Hugh Blair states that 'when certain changes had taken place in the political influence which directed the affairs of Scotland', Robertson

¹⁷ Sher, *Church*, p. 89.

¹⁸ Michael Fry, *The Dundas Despotism*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1992), p. 26.

¹⁹ Clark, p. 210.

²⁰ Clark, p. 211.

'judged it prudent to retire from the public business of the Church'.²¹ Carlyle states cryptically that Robertson had 'a Change of Political Creed in 1783', and, discussing Robertson and Dundas, recalls that 'political differences did [...] take place between them'.²² Robertson's 'political creed' does seem to take a turn towards more openly 'Old' Whig values after his retirement, as can be seen from his 'Jacobin' sermon in 1788, and this would set him apart from a government man like Dundas. That this happened only after his retirement in 1780 adds force to the theory that Robertson modified his real 'Scottish' Whig Presbyterian views while an active politician, as part of the Moderate compromise. He was fortunate in that his period of leadership from the early 1760's to 1780 coincided with a time of ministerial uncertainty in London. This, in turn, meant the absence of an effective Scottish 'manager'. Robertson's ascendancy occurred roughly between the death of Argyll (1761) and the rise of Dundas, and this probably enabled him to function with greater independence than would have been possible with a strong government in power.

Robertson's demarcation of the boundaries between the Kirk and government is evident in a letter written in 1764 to Baron Mure of Caldwell, who acted as a Scottish adviser to Bute, regarding Church appointments:

The great body of the Clergy are warmly disposed to support government, yet we are a jealous body of men, and the interposition of administration in disposing of an office in our own gift would not have the effect you might be apt to suspect.

Later in the letter, Robertson states that 'I make no apology for expressing my sentiments so strongly'.²³ There is a hint of a veiled threat in the language, and Robertson appears to state quite firmly the limits of government interference.

²¹ John Hill, *Account of the Life and Writings of Hugh Blair, D.D.*, (Philadelphia, 1808), p. 216.

²² Carlyle, *Anecdotes*, p. 280; *Carlyle Papers*, MS 23920, f. 84, NLS.

²³ Robertson to Baron Mure of Caldwell, 12/4/1764, *Mure of Caldwell Papers*, MS 4943, ff. 43, 44, NLS.

The arrangement with government may partially explain why Robertson, in his works, expressed views which seem somewhat at odds with his public attitudes, especially over issues such as Catholicism, America and empire. As will emerge in this thesis, there are differences between his public stance on such matters and his writings, and there is also a certain equivocation in the histories themselves. Likewise, his public pronouncements are sometimes equivocal. This frequent ambivalence may be due to his political commitments.

Absent from the 'Reasons' is any assertion that patronage is good in itself, and it is doubtful whether Robertson really thought this. If he did, there would be a case for thinking him inclined to having the Kirk under the control of 'great men'—the government who wished to see patronage enforced, and the patrons themselves, usually landowners or oligarchical town councils. Robertson's public commitment required him to support patronage, but his personal views are another matter. Clark believes that 'The Moderates were not committed to the view that patronage was inherently desirable', and that 'until Robertson's retirement [...] they argued only that it must be accepted *de facto* as a law of the land, to prevent a head-on collision with government, or [...] the emergence of a system of unofficial local Independency'.²⁴ Robertson's personal view of patronage is hinted at by his style of leadership, in which, says Mathieson, 'he acknowledged no patron, and every successive government was constrained [...] to support him on his own terms'.²⁵ His treatment of the man who wished to 'patronize' him on the more personal level also provides a clue. There can be no doubt that Lord Bute played a part in Robertson's appointment as Principal of Edinburgh University and Historiographer Royal for Scotland in the early 1760's, although the extent of Bute's

²⁴ Clark, p. 206.

²⁵ Mathieson, *Awakening*, p. 170.

influence in securing the Principalship is disputed.²⁶ However, Robertson never did anything that Bute wanted in exchange, like moving to London and writing a history of England.²⁷ It appears that Robertson used Bute to obtain advancement but felt no obligation to perform the duties that his patron required.

Clark's views have been challenged by scholars trying to show that Robertson and the Moderates felt that patronage itself was good in that it provided a more 'polite' type of minister. According to Cater, Robertson felt that 'an enlightened clergy was more likely to be established by an enlightened aristocracy than by the free demands of an ignorant democracy', hence his preference for patronage as a means of appointing ministers.²⁸ Sher and Murdoch support this, saying that 'for the Moderates, a key issue was the creation of a polite and enlightened Scottish clergy leading their nation out of the abyss of seventeenth-century fanaticism', and that patronage was seen as the best way to achieve this.²⁹ It has even been suggested by Mark Kingwell that 'politeness' was a political end in itself for Robertson 'as a principle of social order and progress' along Addisonian lines and that 'Robertson and his disciples made politeness the governing notion of their moral and political framework'.³⁰ It could be argued that, for Robertson anyway, the 'governing notion' was Presbyterian government and the authority of the General Assembly, and that 'politeness' was a secondary concern, if that. Certainly we find him in 1764 writing to Gilbert Elliot that 'I consider it a point of great importance in the Police of this country that the Churches should be supplied with Clergymen of moderation and literature' and that it was important to 'prevent this

²⁶ McKelvey, pp. 241-245; Cater, pp. 64-71, Sher, *Church*, pp. 113-115. Sher believes that Cater underestimates Bute's influence in the appointment.

²⁷ See above, p. 47.

²⁸ Cater, p. 78.

²⁹ Richard Sher and Alexander Murdoch, 'Patronage and Party in the Church of Scotland', in *Church, Politics and Society: Scotland 1408-1929*, ed. by Norman MacDougall, (Edinburgh, 1983), pp. 197-220, (p 213).

³⁰ Mark Kingwell, 'Politics and Polite Society in the Scottish Enlightenment', *Historical Reflections*, 19 (1993), 364-387, (pp. 380, 382).

Church from relapsing into [...] Enthusiasm'.³¹ However, Elliot was himself a patron and an important political figure. Robertson could simply be writing what he knew would appeal to such a man. This is particularly so as Robertson needed Elliot's support in getting a Moderate candidate appointed to a vacant Edinburgh church, hence the letter.³² Similar explanation can be found for sentiments in a letter from Robertson to Elliot in 1755. Robertson wished to move from his rural Gladsmuir parish to a living in Edinburgh. He writes that 'I will neither disturb this town nor the Church with any irregular or rather Enthusiastic system either in preaching or in Church Politics' Elliot was the kind of man whose influence could be of great help to Robertson in this situation. As Robertson says in his letter, Elliot had the ear of Argyll and his Scottish agent Lord Milton.³³ It is therefore unsurprising that Robertson writes in a way that would appeal to him. Sher and Murdoch admit that it is possible to interpret Moderate pro-patronage views 'in narrowly political terms, by claiming that the Moderates really meant that patronage was the best way to build up the strength and stature of their party'.³⁴ Sher hints at this attitude on Robertson's part in his article on the Drysdale 'bustle' of the 1760's. The broader issue here was whether church appointments in Edinburgh belonged to the Town Council—the patrons in Edinburgh—or to the Kirk Sessions of the city. Sher states that it was important that the patrons won because this was vital to 'the whole Moderate ideal of a learned, polite, Presbyterian clergy leading Scotland down the road to enlightenment'. However, he also points out that Drysdale—the Moderate candidate for the vacancy that caused the conflict, who had a family connection with Robertson—had 'a fundamental characteristic that made him

³¹ Robertson to Elliot, 29/3/1764, *Minto Papers*, MS 11009, ff. 183, 184.

³² Richard B. Sher, 'Moderates, Managers and Popular Politics in Mid-Eighteenth Century Edinburgh: The Drysdale "Bustle" of the 1760's', in *New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland*, ed. by John Dwyer et al., (Edinburgh, 1982), 179-209, (p. 197).

³³ Robertson to Elliot, 22/2/1755, *Saltoun Papers*, MS 16693, f. 95, NLS.

³⁴ Sher and Murdoch, p. 213.

irresistible to Robertson: he owed his allegiance to Robertson personally rather than to the Moderate party as a whole'. Drysdale's appointment would give Robertson 'a trustworthy and capable assistant whose allegiance would be chiefly to Robertson himself'.³⁵ It is possible, therefore, that Robertson was more interested in his own power as a party leader than in issues of patronage or a 'polite' ministry particularly. Robertson took his position very seriously, and he may have come to identify the well being of the Kirk with his own pre-eminence. An American visitor commented that 'this haughty Prelate if it lay within his power, Would be but little inferior to Archbishop Laud'.³⁶ There is therefore at least some room for doubt about his motives in supporting the Town Council's right of patronage. It is chiefly in connection with the Drysdale affair that his correspondence with Elliot most abounds in sentiments about the need for a 'polite' ministry—by implication, one brought about by patronage.³⁷

Although there were many Moderates—like Carlyle—who really did feel that ministers ought to be more integrated into 'polite' society, Robertson did not personally adopt the 'polite' worldly stance. He did not, like a more traditional Presbyterian cleric, actively condemn things like dancing, cards and the theatre, but he did not participate in such worldly amusements himself.³⁸ One writer has attributed to him 'more than a tinge of the ascetic spirit'.³⁹ He was undoubtedly a sociable man, in that he belonged to clubs, and such sociability is undoubtedly a part of 'politeness'. However, Robertson's clubs were not merely forums for sociability. The Select Society confined its membership, as Emerson points out, to people who could be regarded as 'leaders and governors of society'—like Scottish Presbyterian ministers—and rejected as members those who

³⁵ Sher, 'Drysdale', pp. 185, 187, 190.

³⁶ Benjamin Rush, 'Journal Commencing August 31st, 1766', Dk. 2.18, f. 113, EUL.

³⁷ Robertson to Elliot, 12/8/1762, and 24/8/1762, *Minto Papers*, MS 11009, ff. 153, 157, NLS.

³⁸ See above, pp. 54–55.

³⁹ John Watson, *The Scot of the Eighteenth Century: His Religion and his Life*, (London, 1907), p. 164.

‘lacked [...] significant involvement in the civil and commercial life of the country’.⁴⁰

The Society was a debating forum in which matters of national importance were considered, including, as John Robertson notes, the standing army *versus* militia question and whether commerce was compatible with military spirit. The Poker Club, to which Robertson also belonged, was formed expressly to agitate for the militia.⁴¹ So while Robertson’s membership of sociable institutions is granted, it cannot be said that it indicates a dedication to ‘politeness’ and sociability for their own sakes.

Considering such factors, it is possible to suggest that the idea of patronage producing more worldly ministers was not of major importance to Robertson—certainly not as important as General Assembly authority. Sher and Murdoch, while insisting on the significance of the Moderate argument about a ‘polite’ ministry, have to acknowledge that it was ‘less frequently used than some of their [i.e., the Moderates’] other reasons for supporting patronage’.⁴² Those who claim that Robertson sincerely believed this argument have to ground themselves largely on one speech, made during the Schism Overture debate in the General Assembly of 1766.⁴³ According to Drummond and Bulloch, this speech indicates that ‘Confidence among the Moderates had passed into arrogance’, revealing their true colours about patronage.⁴⁴ However, the main account of this debate is a third-person description in the *Scots Magazine*, written by a writer frankly hostile to the Moderates. ‘It is common’ he writes, ‘to begin by professions of impartiality. These I wholly omit’. He sneers at Robertson for being ‘pleased to make a handsome encomium on himself’ in his speech. According to his account, ‘The eminent doctor [...] favoured us with a sketch of the history of patronage

⁴⁰ Emerson, ‘Social Composition’, pp. 296, 301.

⁴¹ John Robertson, *Militia Issue*, pp. 85–86.

⁴² Sher and Murdoch, p. 214.

⁴³ Sher, *Church*, pp. 130–135; Sher and Murdoch, p. 213.

⁴⁴ Drummond and Bulloch, p. 79.

in the church of Scotland'.⁴⁵ Justification of patronage by appealing to history was another argument used by the Moderates, as Sher and Murdoch point out.⁴⁶ In a debate in 1772, Robertson uses this argument to show that patronage has a historical pedigree.⁴⁷ Interestingly, there is no such Moderate assertion in his Scottish history. Robertson might have feared that controversy might arise if he put such arguments in *Scotland*, but some hint at the legitimacy of patronage might have been expected in a discussion of Scottish religious history by a leading defender of patronage.

At the end of his historical examination in the 1766 speech, Robertson is recorded as stating that, as a result of patronage, 'young gentlemen intended for the ministry endeavoured to accomplish themselves by a more free and liberal education and such qualifications as might render them acceptable to the politer part of mankind'.⁴⁸ This seems conclusive, but the circumstances surrounding the Schism Overture need closer examination in order to find a possible explanation for why Robertson should suddenly use an argument he had not used before. The Moderates' friend, Bute's brother Stuart Mackenzie fell from power in 1765, as a result of continued quarrels with Grenville.⁴⁹ To make matters worse, Grenville's administration was then replaced in the same year by Rockingham's, which, as Sher observes, showed signs of being less favourable to the Moderates.⁵⁰ Some ministers, led by the old Argyll 'manager' Patrick Cuming now sided with the High-Flyers in calling for an enquiry to be made into secessions from the Church, which, they believed, were caused by the enforcement of patronage. It was to this group, as Sher suggests, that Robertson may

⁴⁵ 'Account of the Debate on the Schism Overture', *Scots Magazine*, 28 (1766), 337-341 (pp. 337, 338, 340).

⁴⁶ Sher and Murdoch, p. 212.

⁴⁷ [Boswell], 'Sketch', p. 239.

⁴⁸ 'Schism Overture', p. 340.

⁴⁹ Murdoch, *People Above*, p. 122.

⁵⁰ Sher, *Church*, p. 133.

have been alluding when in his 1766 speech he attacked ‘men at one time promoting one set of measures, and at another espousing the opposite, perhaps as one ministry or another prevails at court’.⁵¹ This is also typical of Robertson’s view of church leaders who tied themselves to government in the way that Cuming had done in the days when he ‘managed’ the Kirk for Argyll, and who now seemed to be taking advantage of the Rockingham administration’s apparent attitude.

Under concerted attack and with government wavering, Robertson needed all the support from ‘great men’ and patrons that he could get, and had to prove to the government that only the Moderates had the power to be feasible allies for government. This may explain his new argument, which is, by implication, flattering to the discrimination of patrons in appointing ministers. There can, of course, be no certainty about this, but the fact that Robertson never used this argument before suggests that he brought it out to deal with an emergency, rather than that he had always held it as a conviction. Together with the absence of any pro-patronage sentiment in his history, his commitment to older ‘Scottish’ Whig and Presbyterian values, and his austere avoidance of ‘polite’ amusements, this point may at least raise some doubt about Robertson’s commitment to patronage as anything other than a means to secure General Assembly authority.

2) ‘Politeness’ and Literary Prestige

Robertson was shrewdly aware that success depended on appealing to a certain type of reader, and this may have caused a ‘political’ modification of his views in his histories. Whatever other reasons he had for writing history, prestige and financial gain were very important. ‘Starving in a garret for the sake of Truth’ writes Lenman, ‘was not a

⁵¹ ‘Schism Overture’, p. 338; Sher, *Church*, p. 133.

lifestyle admired by Scottish intellectuals [...] They all tried to make money'.⁵²

Robertson was no exception, and his attitude was possibly the result of early poverty.

The early death of his parents left him, with a stipend of £75 a year, responsible for six younger sisters and a brother. With assistance from a charitable fund for the families of dead clergymen, he managed to subsist, marry off most of the sisters and find employment for the brother.⁵³ He then assumed fresh responsibility by marrying himself and soon had a large family.

He soon realized what sort of readership he needed. This is shown in Smitten's description of Robertson's London campaign to assure the success of *Scotland*, when he 'adopted a deliberate strategy of creating a groundswell of approval before he approached a bookseller'.⁵⁴ A letter reporting progress shows Robertson's awareness of the need to appeal to the right people:

In order to try whether the commodity I had to dispose of suited the market in this place, I have put my papers into the hands of several literary people and besides them I have got some persons of rank, who lead the fashion in a town where fashion governs everything.

'Literary people' and 'persons of rank'—this description sums up the people Robertson needed. Amongst those he approached, he lists Argyll, Bute, and Walpole'.⁵⁵ These are leading figures in London society, whether for reasons of title or politics (Bute, Argyll) or for reasons of general taste and 'politeness' (Walpole). Throughout his life, Robertson was aware of the importance of bringing literary productions to the attention of the influential. He did this not only with regard to his own works, but also to those of

⁵² Bruce Lenman, *Integration, Enlightenment and Industrialization: Scotland 1746-1832*, (London, 1981), p. 39.

⁵³ *Carlyle Papers*, MS 23920, f. 88, NLS.

⁵⁴ Jeffrey Smitten, 'Robertson's Letters and the Life of Writing', in *Expansion of Empire*, pp. 36-54, (p. 40).

⁵⁵ Robertson to Lord Milton, 10/4/1758, *Saltoun Papers*, MS 16707, ff. 98, 99, NLS.

fellow Scottish historians whom he assisted. He commended Lord Kames's *Historical Law-Tracts* to Tobias Smollet, editor of the *Critical Review*.⁵⁶ He brought younger Scottish historians to the attention of important people as well, recommending Thomas Somerville to John Douglas, Bishop of Carlisle, and Philip Watson to the Earl of Hardwicke.⁵⁷

Robertson's campaign regarding *Scotland* was successful. Writing home from London, he says that 'all the great, the gay and the busy have become at once my readers [...] I have letters from Mr Walpole, Mr Garrick and Dr Warburton'.⁵⁸ A tasteful dilettante, a famous actor and a learned Anglican cleric—different types of people, but all part of the influential readership Robertson wanted. His correspondence frequently displays his concern with preparation, marketability, money and public reception. Minutiae like frontispiece portraits are the subjects of lengthy letters.⁵⁹ Discussing a new edition of *Scotland*, Robertson hopes that some revisions made in it will 'render the work more perfect and more saleable'.⁶⁰ In fact, as O'Brien points out, *Scotland* was 'only slightly revised during Robertson's lifetime' (*NE*: 97, n. 12), but Robertson plainly felt that some revision would boost sales. Writing to his printer, Robertson enquires about money for *India*, which is not even due yet, and has already calculated the amount: £416.13.5 and a farthing.⁶¹ Another letter, to Cadell the bookseller, reveals his anxiety about his work's success: 'It is a fortnight since the Disquisition made its appearance, & I have heard nothing with respect to its reception.

⁵⁶ Robertson to Tobias Smollet, 15/3/1759, Massachusetts Historical Society.

⁵⁷ Robertson to John Douglas, 15/2/1791, *Egerton MSS*, MS Eg 2182, ff. 63-64, BL; Robertson to Earl of Hardwicke, 30/12/1779, *Hardwicke Papers*, Add. MS 35350, ff. 66-67, BL.

⁵⁸ Robertson to Milton, 19/2/1759, *Saltoun Papers*, MS 16711, f. 234, NLS.

⁵⁹ Robertson to Thomas Cadell, 6/9/1771, *Montagu Papers*, MS Montagu d. 9, Bodleian Library.

⁶⁰ Robertson to Cadell (?), 14/4/1784, *William Robertson Papers*, MS 4512, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University.

⁶¹ Robertson to Andrew Strahan, 14/8/1791, Box 1.3.3., New College Library.

Pray write to me as soon as you receive this'.⁶² Discussing Robert Henry's history of Britain, Robertson deals wholly with marketing: 'An authour should sell his first work for what booksellers might give, till it shall appear whether he is an authour of merit, or, which is the same as to purchase money, an authour who pleases the publick'.⁶³ As Robertson plainly aimed at influential people that would influence 'publick' taste, it is important to consider what sort of people these were. Some, like Argyll and Bute, were pillars of the post-Union political establishment. They would not welcome effusions of 'Scottish' patriotism, particularly if this was anti-English. Nor would Buchananite or Fletcherian views about government go down well. Strident Presbyterian views would also not be appreciated by secular politicians, and Anglican clerics like Warburton would not like them either. Addisonian 'politeness' which dominated the readers Robertson wanted, frowned on any manifestation of 'enthusiasm' in religion. Robertson was at a disadvantage simply by being Scottish in a period of increasing English Scotophobia. At best, Scots could expect condescension, as Robertson received from Walpole, who was amazed that good writing could be produced by 'someone whose dialect I scarce understood'.⁶⁴ At worst, they received Johnsonian contempt, and outright public hostility.⁶⁵ No Scottish champion of Scotland would be appreciated in England. Scots who wished to be liked had to downplay their identity. Johnson liked Boswell, whom William Ferguson calls a 'wretched Scotch cringer', for being 'a Scotchman without the faults of a Scotchman'.⁶⁶

Robertson was strongly aware of English attitudes. This can be seen by his

⁶² Robertson to Cadell, 17/6/1791, *Deer Collection, English Prose Writers*, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁶³ Boswell, *Johnson*, II, p. 238.

⁶⁴ Walpole to Robertson, 4/3/1759, in *Walpole's Correspondence*, XV, p. 48.

⁶⁵ Janet Adam Smith, p. 109.

⁶⁶ William Ferguson, *Identity*, p. 227; Boswell, *Johnson*, II, p. 248.

description of the English reception of *Scotland*: 'John Bull is exceedingly astonished [...] that an untravelled Scotsman should write English with so much purity, and in order to account for this, he now firmly believes that I was educated in Oxford'.⁶⁷ This shows Robertson's acute consciousness of the arrogance which domineering nations show to those they see as inferior, which emerges clearly in his histories.

Robertson therefore needed to appeal to a 'polite', English or 'British' (Anglicized) readership, without cringing like Boswell. This may go far to explain the ambivalence and modification of 'Scottish' views in his works. One of the few who was partly conscious of this was Robertson's enemy, the Earl of Buchan. Describing Robertson's supposedly hostile treatment of Mary, Queen of Scots, he says that this is caused by 'the desire of pleasing the English'. 'Authors' he states, 'may enrich themselves, and may become the literary Caesars of the day by courting the prejudices of mankind, and disentangling their consciences from the laws of the Republic of Letters'.⁶⁸ Of course, Buchan *does* see Robertson as a cringer, but he comes close to realizing Robertson's literary predicament. Robertson did wish to enrich himself, and he was something of a 'literary Caesar'. All the same, he did not sink to Boswellian depths.

A similar approach was required regarding continental readership, where Robertson not only needed the approbation of influential *philosophes*, but also had to remember that many Europeans were Catholic. *Philosophes* could, as Renwick shows, interpret his anti-Catholic stance as an 'enlightened' anti-religious one like their own.⁶⁹ However, many European readers, though learned enough to read Robertson's works, might not share *philosophie* views.

⁶⁷ Robertson to Margaret Hepburn?, 19/2/1759, *Saltoun Papers*, MS 16711, f. 234, NLS.

⁶⁸ Earl of Buchan to Gilbert Stuart, 18/4/1783, in Gilbert Stuart, *The History of Scotland from the Establishment of the Reformation till the Death of Queen Mary, to which are annexed Observations concerning the Public Law and the Constitution of Scotland*, 2nd edition, 2 vols, (London, 1784), Appendix II, pp. 151-159, p. 158.

⁶⁹ Renwick, p. 159.

Robertson was eager to bring his work to the notice of influential Europeans. Writing to an acquaintance in Europe, he suggests that ‘as you are now near Voltaire [...] try if you can learn if he has ever seen the History of Scotland, and what he thinks of it’.⁷⁰ Robertson criticized Voltaire’s historical methods and religious attitudes.⁷¹ However, he also knew that a good word from Voltaire would do his reputation good. Renwick points out that ‘The future fortunes of Robertson were [...] ultimately in the hands of influential men’ among whom he lists Diderot, D’Alembert, Raynal, Condorcet and Morellet ‘whose opinion, freely expressed in that osmotic world of the *salons* would [...] send intersecting ripples in all directions.’⁷² Renwick does not, however, consider the implications of dependence on *philosophe* opinion for Robertson’s approach to his writing, which would have to address *philosophe* prejudice. While *philosophes* could appreciate attacks on Catholicism, they would not appreciate strident Protestantism. They also had decided views on historical subjects, which may explain why, in writing *Charles V*, Robertson included the *Progress of Society* introduction (an example of a type of historiography in which Robertson had hitherto shown little interest). Robertson knew that this appealed most to French readers.⁷³

It appears that Robertson, in his public character, or when personal advancement was in question, expressed views which may have been at odds with his older, ‘Scottish’ Presbyterian and Whig values, and that he did the same thing with regard to the prejudices of his readers. However, that he was more firmly committed to those older values than to those he had to espouse in his acquired contexts is suggested by a certain ‘thus-far-and-no-further’ attitude regarding such modification. His refusal to break with Presbyterian tradition by countenancing the abolition of subscription to the

⁷⁰ Robertson to James Edmonstoune of Newton, 4/1/1762, *Hume and his Circle*, MS 1005, f. 6, NLS.

⁷¹ See above, pp. 9-10, 61.

⁷² Renwick, p. 149.

⁷³ See above, p. 30.

Westminster Standards is an example. Similarly, his refusal to obey Bute by moving to London, and the fact that he apparently did not want to switch to the Church of England, even if this meant possible advancement, suggest that there was a point beyond which he would not go. There is also evidence that he took the same attitude regarding his works. Anxious as he was to attract French readers, he did not want changes made to his treatment of the Reformation in the French translation of *Charles V*, as he wrote to his translator:

I am afraid that the history of this event as written by a Protestant clergyman may appear to you too partial to be published in France. Perhaps you may find it necessary to deal with it as M. la Chapelle, the translator of the History of Scotland did [...] He fairly translated what I had written, and threw in a few words of his own containing such strictures upon it as might prevent any body from taking offence [...] it will be more agreeable to me than if any alteration were made in the work.⁷⁴

There is compromise here, but Robertson prefers his version of the Reformation to be left intact, even if it offends Catholic readers. He probably did not go far enough in addressing Catholic prejudice. Franco Venturi points out that an Italian reviewer criticized the anti-Catholic opinions in *Scotland*, while an anonymous Italian translator of that work, while admiring Robertson's patriotism, omitted some of the anti-Catholic sections.⁷⁵ That Robertson did not please such readers, even when he was prepared to make some gestures towards them, suggests that his commitment to older 'Scottish' values was stronger than that to literary success. The same can plausibly be said regarding political expediency or personal advancement. How Robertson modified his 'Scottish' views while remaining essentially true to them must now be considered in the context of his literary works.

⁷⁴ Robertson to Suard, 4/4/1768, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

⁷⁵ Franco Venturi, 'Scottish Echoes in Eighteenth-Century Italy', in *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. by Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff, (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 345-362, (pp. 356-357).

CHAPTER IV

Scottish History

Robertson's first major work has been largely discussed with reference to three subjects. These are royal authority and resistance to it by the feudal nobility in Scottish history; the Reformation; and Mary, Queen of Scots. I shall attempt to show that, despite literary modifications, Robertson's treatment of these subjects shows a strong commitment to 'Scottish' patriotic, political and religious values.

1) Nobility, Feudalism, Monarchy and Authority

Kidd believes that Robertson 'sincerely held a Royalist historical perspective' (SSP: 180). Because of this, he 'sympathized with the problems faced by the late mediaeval kings of Scotland, partly through a concern for order *per se*, so that he might distance himself and the prevailing "moderatism" of the eighteenth-century Kirk from Buchanan's politics' (SSP: 181-182). Kidd's Robertson also regretted that no strong monarch arose in Scotland to bridle the nobility (SSP: 182). To O'Brien, the royalism is Voltairean and Robertson's 'cosmopolitanism' leads him to place Scottish feudalism in a European context, which 'militates against the inherited exceptionalist historiography of Scotland's mediaeval past' (NE: 111,113). Although she acknowledges tension in Robertson's view of Scotland's history, she insists that 'his view of feudal society as pre- or anti-modern ultimately prevails over his celebration of [...] martial independence and public virtue in Scotland's past' (NE: 113).

The notion that Robertson discounted Scotland's uniqueness is disputable. His account of Scottish feudalism does open by describing common European feudal characteristics (S I: 224-231). This appears to confirm Kidd's belief in Robertson's

view of the common 'Gothic' heritage in Europe.¹ However, he then identifies factors that distinguish Scotland from the rest of Europe, and he is not wholly disapproving in his description. He does indeed begin by saying that 'the balance which ought to be preserved between a king and his nobles was almost entirely lost in Scotland' (S I: 232), but he goes on to dilute this with strangely positive language. Concerning Scottish topography, a factor in noble power, he states that 'Level and open countries are formed for servitude', while 'Mountains, and fens, and rivers, set bounds to despotic power, and amidst these is the natural seat of freedom and independence' (S I: 232). This language—'servitude' rather than, for example, 'subordination', or 'freedom', rather than 'licentiousness', hardly suggests condemnation. Robertson's remark about flat countries may also, as Fry suggests, be a 'dig at the Southron' about English subservience.²

Another factor, clanship, is also described favourably. A nobleman's clan followers are 'ever ready to sacrifice their lives in defense of his person or of his fame', while royal troops give only 'that cold service which money purchases or authority extorts' (S I: 235-236). This clearly shows the 'Scottish' civic humanist Whig dislike for mercenary armies and despotic authority.

The belief that Robertson saw absolute monarchy as an admirable check to noble power is also questionable. Like Hume, Robertson describes Henry VII in England reducing noble power: 'Henry undermined his barons by encouraging them to sell their lands, which enriched the commons and gave them a weight in the legislature unknown to their predecessors' (S I: 247). Hume's account is more enthusiastic about the sale of noble lands: 'by means of this law, joined to the beginning luxury and refinements of the age, the great fortunes of the barons were gradually dissipated'; his

¹ See above, pp 38-39.

² Fry, 'Whig Interpretation', p 76.

approval of this process is clear from his statement that 'the life of a modern nobleman is more laudable than that of an ancient baron'.³ Robertson, however, seems dubious: 'The artifices of Henry resembled those slow poisons which waste the constitution, but become not mortal till some distant period' (SI: 246). The imagery of poison is not positive. Considering such views, it is unsurprising that Robertson does not, as Kidd suggests, take a 'royalist' view of Scottish monarchy. His treatment of James III is especially significant, because this monarch, as Burns states, is immensely important to Scottish political theory.⁴ James is the first authentic and accessible Scottish king to be apparently deposed and killed by his nobles in the exercise of that constitutional tradition postulated by Buchanan. Thomas Innes, the Jacobite historian whose scholarly debunking of the mythical Scottish Royal line did much, as Kidd shows, to undermine Buchanan's reputation (SSP: 101-107), traces the origin of this tradition to the deposition of James III. He claims that there was no mention of Scottish royal accountability before the first parliament of James IV, which followed his father's violent death. For Innes, Boece's history, with its tales of ancient kings being deposed for their misconduct, is unreliable, as hardly any of the first forty kings Boece claims for Scotland are mentioned by earlier historians. Boece's sources were therefore not, as Boece believed, the works of 11th or 12th century writers, but 'late inventions composed no sooner than the fifteenth age, after the death of James III'. Buchanan deliberately followed Boece, knowing his history to be faulty, in order to back the constitutional assertions made in the *De Jure*.⁵

Robertson accepts Innes's dismissal of the Boece/Buchanan account of remote

³ Hume, *History*, III, p. 77.

⁴ J. H. Burns, 'George Buchanan and the Anti-Monarchomachs', in *Scots and Britons*, pp. 138-158, (pp. 145-146).

⁵ Thomas Innes, *A Critical Essay on the Ancient Inhabitants of Northern Britain, or Scotland*, ed. by George Grub, (Edinburgh, 1879), pp. 149-150, 209, 215, 218, 220

Scottish history (*SI*: 210). This acceptance, which was shared many other Scottish writers of Robertson's day, is seen by Kidd as important, both in the supposed general dismissal of the 'Scottish' past by eighteenth-century Scottish Whig historians, and in the transition from a 'Gaelic' to a 'Gothic' perception of Scottish history (*SSP*: 97; *BI*: 145, 280). However, if Robertson accepts Innes's attack on the 'Scottish' constitutional tradition's unhistorical origins, he does not abandon the values associated with that tradition, one of which is the accountability of monarchs. He certainly does not adopt Innes's Jacobite political views about monarchy, and takes a dim view of James III. Pauline Moore identifies Buchananite similarities in Robertson's account of James's preference for low-born favourites rather than the nobility who should be his natural advisers.⁶ Buchanan shows James with 'none but Upstarts about him: Upon them he bestowed great Honours and Preferments'.⁷ Robertson echoes this: 'James [...] bestowed every mark of confidence and affection upon a few mean persons of professions so dishonourable as ought to have rendered them unworthy of his presence' and 'so despicable a retinue [...] accounts for the indignation of the nobles when they beheld the favours, due to them, bestowed on such unworthy objects' (*SI*: 265). Robertson makes the nobility's anger seem justified. Hume, on the other hand, is far more sympathetic to James, showing him in a 'no win' situation:

When he bestowed his confidence on any of the principal nobility, he found that they exalted their own family to such a height as was dangerous to the prince [...] When he conferred favour on any person of meaner birth, on whose submission he could more depend, the barons [...] proceeded to the utmost extremity against the sovereign.⁸

⁶ Moore, pp. 284-285.

⁷ Buchanan, *History*, II, p. 89.

⁸ Hume, *History*, III, p. 24.

Robertson is also contemptuous about Queen Mary's lowly favourite, David Rizzio—whom Buchanan and Knox also despise⁹—and about Captain James Stewart, raised by James VI to be Earl of Arran (S II: 114-115, 391). Such attitudes provide a contrast to the self-consciously Voltairean view taken by Robertson in his *Edinburgh Review* article about Peter the Great, and are characteristic of a dislike for absolutism—an absolute monarch like Peter is a leveller, favouring anyone he pleases, regardless of rank or national tradition.¹⁰

For Buchanan, a major insult to the nobility is James III's edict forbidding anyone other than his retinue to bear arms in the King's vicinity, which he sees as 'presenting an image of perfect Slavery'.¹¹ Robertson also notices this, which 'at a time when no man of rank left his house without a numerous retinue of armed followers was, in effect, debarring the nobles from all access to the King' (S I: 226). More serious among the 'insults to the nobility', for Robertson is the creation of 'a standing guard, a thing [...] inconsistent with the familiarity and confidence with which monarchs then lived among their nobles' (S I: 269).

The final decision to depose James is not condemned by Robertson: 'So many injuries provoked the most considerable nobles to take arms and [...] they openly declared their intention of depriving James of a crown of which he had discovered himself to be so unworthy' (S I: 269-270). Considering the way Robertson describes James's reign, it is difficult not to believe that he approves of the deposition and sees James's attitude to his nobles as wrong. By contrast, he approves of James's successor James IV who 'did not dread their [i.e., the nobility's] power, which he considered as the security of his kingdom, not as an object of terror' (S I: 271). Robertson does not

⁹ Buchanan, *History*, II, p. 300; Knox, *Reformation*, I, pp. 44, 112; II, pp. 179-180

¹⁰ See above, p. 15.

¹¹ Buchanan, *History*, II, p. 89-90.

openly approve of the deposition; such blatant approval would not, of course, agree with his political and literary commitments. This consideration may also explain an inconsistent twist in the conclusion of Robertson's treatment of James III. Although Robertson states that James was characterized by 'Suspicion, indolence, immoderate attachment to favourites', he adds that 'the character of a cruel and unrelenting tyrant seems to be unjustly affixed to him' (*S I*: 270). Having provided a fairly Buchananite view of James, Robertson then disagrees at the last minute with Buchanan, for whom James was typical of contemporary European monarchs who 'laid the Foundations of Tyranny in their respective Kingdoms'.¹²

Robertson shows the same attitude to other depositions in *Scotland*. The case of Mary of Guise clearly indicates Robertson's sense of patriotism and hints at his views on empire. According to Kidd, Robertson 'demonstrated aristocratic patriotism to be a sham' (*SSP*: 182), but this is only partly true. He is, as Kidd says, critical of noble factions serving English interests (*SSP*: 182-183). Discussing the alliance of James III's rebellious brother with England, he is critical, using as his source the Jacobite historian Patrick Abercromby, whose work exalted the Scottish monarchy rather than the nobility, as Kidd describes (*SSP*: 74-75, 81-82). Robertson also criticizes the Earl of Moray and other anti-Marian nobles as 'the dupes of Elizabeth's policy' and states that 'the dependence on Elizabeth under which he [Moray] brought Scotland was disgraceful' (*S II*: 124, 316). Nonetheless, Robertson does find real patriotism in Scottish reaction to the French control represented by Mary of Guise.

Kidd admits that Robertson saw events of the 1550's as 'effecting the liberation of Scotland from French imperial ambitions' (*SSP*: 194). The word 'imperial' provides an unwitting clue to Robertson's views. The earlier sixteenth century saw an

¹² Buchanan, *History*, II, pp. 93-94.

increasingly domineering French presence in Scotland, and Robertson shows great interest in the 'imperial' attitude of the French. The French are arrogant:

They scorn to disguise, or to lay aside, the distinguishing manners of their own nation, or to make allowance for what may differ from them among others. For this reason, the behaviour of their armies has [...] been insupportable to strangers and has always exposed them to hatred and often to destruction (S I: 345).

Scottish response to this is justified patriotic resentment:

The Scots, naturally an irascible and high-spirited people, and who, of all nations, can least bear the most distant insinuation of contempt, were not of a temper to admit the pretensions of such assuming guests [...] disgust grew insensibly to a degree of indignation that could hardly be restrained (S I: 345).

The attitude of the French for Robertson is, as we shall see, typical of domineering nations. This consciousness of 'imperial' contempt runs through Robertson's work. He sees it as responsible for the carnage in America, and warns against its adoption by the British in India. Like many Scottish writers before him, Robertson abhors this 'imperial' attitude and supports defensive action by 'inferior' peoples to oppose it.

Patriotism, together with religion and anti-despotic feeling, is for Robertson a factor in the revolt of the Protestant Lords of the Congregation against the French puppet Mary of Guise. Pauline Moore has noticed that Robertson shows Scottish nobles as 'motivated by love of country, and as desirous of maintaining its independence in contrast to those monarchs [who] ally with foreign powers whose aim is merely [...] to use the Scots.'¹³ As Moore's thesis is largely confined to *Scotland*, however, she misses the implications of Robertson's patriotic stance for his works on colonial history.

As Regent, Mary of Guise rules in French interests and Robertson's account of Scottish reaction shows patriotic, anti-despotic behaviour by the nobles. The main

¹³ Moore, p. 318.

reaction to her comes in 1559, with the Congregation's revolt. The cause of this, Robertson makes clear, is provocation by the Regent acting on orders from her French Guise relations to destroy Scottish Protestantism. 'Instructions for this purpose', writes Robertson, 'were sent from France to the Queen Regent' (S I: 391). The Regent, 'devoted to the interest of France [...] prepared to execute their [the Guises'] commands with implicit submission' (S I: 392). She issues an order 'enjoining all persons to observe the approaching festival of Easter according to the Romish ritual' (S I: 393). When the Protestant nobles protest that she is violating previous commitments about religion, her response is despotic: ' "The promises of princes" says she "ought not to be too carefully remembered, nor the performance of them exacted, unless it suits their own conveniency"' (S I: 393). This is very close to Buchanan. The 1751/2 translation of his history gives Mary's statement as 'The promises of Princes were no further to be urged upon them for Performance than it stood with their Conveniency'.¹⁴

When the Regent hears that the Reformed faith has been introduced into Perth, she abandons all pretence of conciliation: 'At once she threw off the mask and issued a mandate summoning all of the Protestant preachers [...] to a court of justice which was to be held at Stirling' (S I: 394). The preachers head for Stirling, but are accompanied by a multitude of Protestant supporters. This, however, as Robertson points out, was accepted Scottish practice, not an extraordinary display of belligerence: 'At that time [...] persons accused of any crime were accompanied to the place of trial by a retinue of their friends and adherents [...] Authorised by this ancient practise, the reformed convened in great numbers to attend their pastors to Stirling'

¹⁴ Buchanan, *History*, II, p. 247.

(S I: 394). In contrast to the arbitrary behaviour of the foreign Regent, the Scottish Protestants follow 'ancient practise'. Mary, alarmed by their approach, empowers John Erskine of Dun 'to promise, in her name, that she would put a stop to the intended trial, on condition the preachers and their retinue advanced no nearer to Stirling' (S I: 394).

The Protestants agree, but Mary breaks her word; the trial proceeds without the accused, and 'upon their non-appearance [...] they were pronounced outlaws. By this ignoble artifice [...] the Queen forfeited the esteem and confidence of the whole nation' (S I: 395). In asserting that Mary made a promise and broke it, Robertson agrees with Buchanan and Knox.¹⁵ Hume takes a different view. According to Pocock, 'Hume was a cosmopolitan and something of an expatriate, whereas Robertson saw Scotland from within'.¹⁶ Hume feels none of the patriotism shown in Robertson's account, and, furthermore, has different views on liberty and authority: 'liberty is the perfection of civil society, but still authority must be acknowledged essential to its very existence: and in those contests, which so often take place between the one and the other, the latter may [...] challenge the preference'.¹⁷ The clash with the Regent is one such contest, and Hume sides with the authority of the expatriate Mary, doubting whether she ever made the fateful promise. By his account, 'she entertained apprehensions of an insurrection and *it is said* dissipated the people by a promise that nothing should be done to the prejudice of the ministers' (my emphasis). He also adds a note disputing the promise.¹⁸

Robertson continues with a description of Protestant response. Stirred by a sermon from Knox, Protestants in Perth destroy churches and monasteries. The Regent

¹⁵ Buchanan, *History*, II, p. 248; Knox, *Reformation*, I, pp. 160-161.

¹⁶ Pocock, *Barbarism*, II, p. 268.

¹⁷ Hume, 'Of the Origin of Government', in *Essays*, pp. 37-41, (p. 41).

¹⁸ Hume, *History*, IV, pp. 22, 387.

decides on armed response, and Robertson again stresses foreignness in this: 'She had already drawn the troops in French pay to Stirling; with these [...] she marched directly to Perth' (S I: 397). Before war can break out, however, negotiations occur, and a treaty is made, its chief clause being 'that no French garrison should be left in Perth, and no French soldier should approach within three miles of that place' (S I: 398).

The Regent then breaks *this* commitment: 'She introduced French troops into Perth, fined some of the inhabitants, punished others, removed the magistrates [...] and on her returning to Stirling, she left behind her a garrison of six hundred men', trying to cover this by 'alleging that the body of men left at Perth was [...] composed of native Scots, though kept in pay by the King of France' (S I: 399). Robertson here goes further than Buchanan, who states that the soldiers in question *were* Scots in French pay, although, like Knox, he stresses that this makes little difference to the spirit of the treaty.¹⁹ Hume, again, tries to absolve the Regent: 'Some of the inhabitants [of Perth] it was *pretended*, were molested on account of the late violences; and some companies of Scotch soldiers, *supposed* to be in French pay were quartered on the town' (my emphasis). Again, a note is added, doubting the Regent's guilt.²⁰ Hume also later disputed the point in a letter to Robertson.²¹

The remainder of Robertson's story is conflict. The Regent endangers Scottish religion, liberty and national independence: 'it was now apparent that not only the religion, but the liberties of the kingdom were threatened; and that the French troops were to be employed as instruments for subduing the Scots' (S I: 399). Throughout the account, Robertson admires the Congregation nobles, who 'were animated with the

¹⁹ Buchanan, *History*, II, p. 250; Knox, *Reformation*, I, p. 180.

²⁰ Hume, *History*, IV, pp. 25, 388.

²¹ Hume to Robertson, 29/5/1759, in *New Letters*, p. 55.

warmest love of civil liberty, which they conceived to be in imminent danger from the attempts of the French forces' (S I: 402). The Regent's conduct is characterized by 'repeated and wanton instances of perfidy' (S I: 404). Finally, the Congregation call a convention at which 'all gave their suffrages, without one dissenting voice, for depriving the Queen of the office of Regent, which she exercised so much to the detriment of the kingdom' (S I: 426). Robertson, judging by his treatment of the revolt, plainly feels this justified, and this is emphasized by his list of the grievances presented at the convention:

The introducing of foreign troops [...] the promoting strangers to offices of great power and dignity; the debasing the current coin; the subverting of the ancient laws; the imposing of new and burdensome taxes, an the attempting to subdue the kingdom and to oppress its liberties by open and repeated acts of violence are enumerated at great length (S I: 426-427).

By presenting this as a description of the Congregation's grievances, rather than as his own opinion, Robertson distances himself from open approval. A blatantly 'Scottish' statement of approval would not square with Robertson's political commitment to law and order, or the views of his projected readership. Robertson's summing up of the situation fudges the issue with historical discussion: 'Violent as this action may appear, there wanted not principles in the constitution to justify and to authorise it' (S I: 427). By citing 'constitutional' precedent, Robertson places himself in the camp of Buchanan, whose political theory depended on an ancient Scottish constitution that justified such actions. Robertson appears to support this, stressing that 'In every age, the nobles not only claimed, but exercised the right to control the king, and no Prince ever ventured to transgress the boundaries which law had prescribed to prerogative, without meeting resistance' (S I: 428). The nobles are only following accepted Scottish practice:

Encouraged by the spirit of the constitution, and countenanced by the example of their ancestors, the Lords of the Congregation thought it

incumbent on them [...] to inquire into the mal-administration of the Queen Regent, and to preserve their country from being enslaved or conquered, by depriving her of the power to execute such a pernicious scheme (*SI*: 429).

By justifying the nobles' action with an appeal to a historical 'constitution', Robertson creates the same essential effect as if he had openly approved, but distances himself with scholarly historical consideration. He might accept Innes's debunking of the mythical history of Fordun, Boece and Buchanan in which that constitution was traditionally grounded (*SI*: 210), but he retains the spirit of that constitution in describing the concerns of the Congregation. Even Kidd has to admit—in a very short paragraph—that the historian 'defended the deprivation of the Queen regent in 1559 on grounds of constitutional precedent' (*SSP*: 197). Kidd's grudging admission of this shows that there are problems, not only with his contention that Robertson favoured the establishment of strong monarchies, but also with his belief that eighteenth-century Scottish Whig historians rejected ancient constitutions (*SSP*: 108-122). O'Brien, similarly, does not give much attention to the Congregation, which is unsurprising considering her belief that Robertson 'ridiculed Buchanan's notion that the nobility had been [...] the disinterested guardians of Scottish liberty' (*NE*: 105). Robertson's treatment of the events of 1559 shows that this view is not really acceptable.

2) John Knox, Reformation and Religion

Robertson's view of Knox is important, because modern authorities insist that Robertson disapproved of him. Robertson's view of Knox is, in fact, almost wholly admiring. Even the modifications made to this admiration, which Robertson probably felt necessary owing to his 'Moderate' position and the views of a 'polite' English or 'British' Scottish readership, are minimal.

Robertson introduces him as ‘the famous John Knox’, who has ‘better qualifications of learning and more extensive views than any of his predecessors in Scotland’ (*S I*: 347). Knox also has ‘a natural intrepidity of mind, which set him above fear [...] Instead of amusing himself with lopping the branches, he struck directly at the root of Popery’ (*S I*: 347). When the Protestants call to him in Geneva for aid against the Regent, Knox leaves for Scotland and ‘hurried instantly to Perth, to share with his brethren in the common danger, or to assist them in the common cause’ (*S I*: 396). When the Congregation is demoralized, Knox gives them courage: ‘The spirit of Knox, however, still remained undaunted and erect, and [...] he addressed, to his desponding hearers, an exhortation which wonderfully animated and revived them’ (*S II*: 7). There is admittedly some criticism when Robertson describes Knox supporting Protestant rioters who, in 1563, engage in ‘rash and unjustifiable acts of violence’, and Robertson hints that Knox’s acquittal in the trial following these events was largely due to biased Protestant judges (*S II*: 97). This mild gesture to the cause of order is, however, outweighed by Robertson’s admiration for Knox elsewhere. The final summary of Knox’s character does show modifications in favour of ‘politeness’ and order, but is largely complimentary:

Zeal, intrepidity, disinterestedness, were virtues which he possessed in an eminent degree. He was acquainted, too, with the learning cultivated among divines in that age, and excelled in that species of eloquence which is calculated to rouse and to inflame. His maxims, however, were too severe. Rigid and uncomplying himself, he shewed no indulgence to the infirmities of others. Regardless of the distinctions of rank and character, he uttered his admonitions with an acrimony and vehemence, more apt to irritate than to reclaim. This often betrayed him into indecent and undutiful expressions with respect to the Queen’s person and conduct. Those very qualities, however, which now render his character less amiable, fitted him to be the instrument of Providence for advancing the reformation among a fierce people, and enabling him to face dangers, and to surmount opposition, from which a person of a more gentle spirit would have been apt to shrink back (*S II*: 359-361).

This passage has been used to show that Robertson disliked Knox. Burleigh quotes part of it to show that Robertson's chief comment on Knox is that he is 'too severe and rigid'.²² Harvie goes further, stating that 'Robertson regarded John Knox as a boorish ruffian and said so'.²³ As we can see, Robertson's view is more complex, and his opinion of Knox's boorishness is more than balanced by his admiration for Knox's fearlessness, both in the above passage and elsewhere. O'Brien seizes on this passage to say that 'Robertson overcomes his palpable distaste for the crude personality of John Knox by emphasizing his instrumentality to a larger plan' (*NE*: 126). This again ignores Robertson's admiration for Knox, and implies that Robertson shows Knox as a Providential instrument by way of apology for his 'crude personality'. Some of Robertson's readers could have interpreted this passage in this way, but calling someone the chosen instrument of Providence can be complimentary as easily as it can be apologetic. Furthermore, a contemporary review of *Scotland* quotes the above excerpt, taking the view that Robertson is too favourable to Knox. Mentioning Robertson's Presbyterianism, it states that 'it is almost impossible [...] for the most impartial writer, to divest himself entirely of all prejudices of country, education and profession' so that 'some of our readers may perhaps imagine, that a certain degree of these prejudices can be found in the character which he [i.e., Robertson] gives of Knox [...] where, though his failings be acknowledged, yet an apology for them is, at the same time, artfully interwoven'.²⁴ Hume may have written this review, and this section about Knox has been quoted to strengthen the case for his authorship.²⁵ If Hume is the author, then another illustration of the difference between the two

²² J.H.S. Burleigh, 'The Scottish Reformation as seen in 1660 and 1760'. *Journal of the Scottish Church History Society*, 13 (1959), 241-256, (p. 254).

²³ Harvie, p. 128.

²⁴ [David Hume?], 'Review of *Scotland*', *Critical Review*, 7 (1759), 89-103, (p. 102).

²⁵ David R. Raynor, 'Hume and Robertson's History of Scotland', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 10 (1987), 59-63, (p. 62).

historians is provided. Robertson clearly shows more admiration for Knox than condemnation, and his description of Knox's last days is unstintingly laudatory:

During a lingering illness, he discovered the utmost fortitude, and met the approaches of death with magnanimity inseparable from his character. He was constantly employed in acts of devotion, and comforted himself with those prospects of immortality which not only preserve good men from desponding, but fill them with exultation in their last moments (*S II*: 361).

There is no sign here of any 'palpable distaste' for Knox. In suggesting this as Robertson's view, O'Brien attributes Humean views to Robertson. It is Hume who sneers at 'the rustic apostle', and says that his 'political principles [...] were as full of sedition as his theological were of rage and bigotry'—not Robertson.²⁶

Robertson's view of Knox raises the question of his approach to what Kidd calls 'Presbyterian political theory' (*SSP*: 197), meaning Knox's notion of the duty to resist ungodly rulers, and Buchanan's blend of civic humanism and ancient Scottish constitutionalism, which was eagerly adopted by Presbyterians in their struggles. Moore correctly says that Robertson does not 'openly endorse the subject's right to resistance'. Robertson's only comment on this right as such is thoroughly equivocal: the 'general right of resistance' is described as 'so just in its own nature, but so delicate in its application to particular cases' (*S II*: 109). This can be variously interpreted, depending on which half of the statement one sees as important. Where Moore goes astray is in saying that Robertson examines each example of resistance as a 'particular case' in order to show that 'strictly illegal actions are often necessary'.²⁷ This would mean that Robertson, who approves of all the major incidences of resistance occurring in his works, saw *all* these instances as 'strictly illegal', though justified by extraordinary circumstances. This suggests that Robertson grants only the

²⁶ Hume, *History*, IV, p. 41.

²⁷ Moore, pp. 403, 404.

concession made by Hume, who allows that resistance 'is admitted in extraordinary emergencies' but generally sees 'the maxims of resistance' as 'so pernicious and so destructive of civil society'.²⁸ Hume's history contains a long disquisition pointing out that resistance to and deposition and destruction of a monarch is justifiable in the case of someone like Nero, but not in that of Charles I.²⁹ If Robertson held such views, it would mean that he saw sixteenth-century history as a series of extraordinary events, all justifying illegal actions, a list of exceptions to a rule. This seems unlikely. It is far more logical to believe that a historian who approvingly describes incidences of a principle being put into practice generally approves of the principle, even if he does not expressly say so. Mary Fearnley-Sander realizes this when she points out that Robertson not only uses Knox's history of the Reformation as a major source but also appears to agree with his version of events. This is certainly true, as she briefly points out, regarding Robertson's treatment of Mary of Guise and the French attempts at controlling Scotland. However, her assertion that this is because these threaten 'the liberty of *Britain*' (my emphasis), is largely incorrect, and shows how even a writer who stands apart from the general trend of thought about Robertson can fall into error.³⁰ It is the liberties of *Scotland*, not 'Britain', that he sees as endangered, and 'Scottish' defensive patriotism that sets him against French domination.

Open agreement with Knox would be inappropriate for Robertson the Moderate ally of government and order, who needed to attract a readership steeped in 'politeness' and disdain for 'enthusiasm'. Robertson's wider treatment of events must be considered to arrive at his apparent views. In this connection, it is worth looking at the context of Robertson's non-committal remark about resistance. It occurs in an

²⁸ Hume, 'Of Passive Obedience', in *Essays*, pp. 488-492, (pp. 490, 491).

²⁹ Hume, *History*, V, pp. 544-546.

³⁰ Fearnley-Sander, 'Knoxian Tradition', pp. 336-337.

account of a debate between Knox and Maitland of Lethington, who represents the government of Queen Mary:

Maitland publicly accused Knox of teaching seditious doctrine, concerning the right of subjects to resist those sovereigns who trespass against the duty which they owe to the people. Knox was not backward to justify what he had taught and upon *this general right of resistance, so just in its own nature, but so delicate in its application to particular cases*, there ensued a debate, which admirably displays the talents and character of both the disputants; the acuteness of the former, embellished with learning, but prone to subtilty; the vigorous understanding of the latter, delighting in bold sentiments, and superior to all fear (*S II: 109; my emphasis*).

Robertson is evidently more enthusiastic about Knox, the advocate of resistance, than Maitland, the critic of it. His descriptions of Maitland elsewhere are also significant. Maitland is described as someone whose ‘address sometimes degenerated into cunning’ and whose ‘invention, over-fertile, suggested to him [...] chimerical schemes of policy’, who has an ‘enterprising spirit’, which, however, ‘engaged him in projects vast and splendid, but beyond his utmost power to execute’ (*S II: 7*). Robertson’s views of the right of resistance is hinted at by his different views of those who espoused or condemned it, and is strengthened by his general treatment of occasions when resistance is exercised.

Robertson’s treatment of Knox and resistance is typical of the Tacitean tactics he uses in dealing with awkward subjects. The importance of Tacitus to the ‘Scottish’ tradition of defensive patriotism has already been discussed.³¹ Tacitus was also important to eighteenth-century historians generally, because of their increasing interest in issues like barbarism and civilization. Gibbon based the crucial ninth chapter of the *Decline and Fall* on Tacitus’s *Germania*. Like Robertson, Tacitus had to write and function within conflicting contexts. He personally may have had republican beliefs, and seems to be suspicious of Roman imperial activity, but he

³¹ See above, p. 37.

wrote under an essentially monarchical government which controlled a large empire. The apparent result is ambiguity in his writing, which can be variously interpreted. At the same time, Tacitus appears to point subtly to his own feelings, and this can only be realized by considering a given work as a whole, rather than focussing on any one section of it. His handling of the Caledonian/Roman conflict is an example. The patriotic and anti-imperial speech of Calgacus is seemingly balanced by a speech from the Roman general Agricola. Agricola's speech is, however, shorter, and appears less stirring, although we have no way of knowing what Tacitus's Roman readers thought about this. Furthermore, if one considers Tacitus's wider treatment of the Roman occupation of Britain, one finds more indication of what seems to be his position. Under Roman rule, he states, the Britons 'learned, like any Romans, to condone seductive vices'. When the Britons are preparing to revolt under Boadicea, Tacitus makes them say that 'We have country, wives and parents to fight for; the Romans have nothing but greed and self-indulgence'.³² All in all, these look like subtle hints that Tacitus's view of Roman presence in Britain is negative, and this can be set against the balanced effect of the Calgacus and Agricola speeches.

Robertson was obviously familiar with the works of Tacitus. He cites him in the *Progress of Society* (C I: 188-192), and he must have been in Robertson's mind when Robertson described Roman failure to conquer Scotland.³³ Whatever contribution Tacitus may have made to his 'Scottish' views on patriotism and empire, Robertson certainly seems to use his literary strategy. His equivocal, balanced remark about resistance must be considered against his comparative treatment of Knox and Maitland, and the general way he deals with instances of resistance, to construct what appears to be a feasible interpretation.

³² Tacitus, *Agricola*, pp. 63, 66, 67, 80-83 (Calgacus's speech), 84-86 (Agricola's speech).

³³ See above, p. 37.

In *Scotland*, Robertson usually discusses resistance in relation to religion and patriotism, so that, while he apparently favours it when it is employed in a Protestant, patriotic and anti-despotic cause, he condemns it when used in an alien, Catholic one. The reign of James VI sees repeated disturbances by Catholic nobles—and Robertson condemns these. The man backing them is the Catholic despot Philip II of Spain. Through Jesuit agents, he approaches Catholic nobles, and ‘Zeal for Popery, and the artful insinuations of these emissaries, induced several noblemen to favour a measure which tended so manifestly to the destruction of their country’ (*S III*: 87). As Robertson associates Protestantism with patriotism when discussing the Congregation revolt, so here he associates Catholicism with alien plots and treachery. Throughout the 1590’s, Catholic nobles cause continual trouble. James VI is criticized by Robertson for being too soft; even a shoulder-note, supposed to be a simple guidepost for the reader, reads as ‘Excessive lenity to the Popish Lords’ (*S III*: 89). As with Louis XIV, Robertson supports royal authority against Catholicism.³⁴ James gains nothing by his leniency; the Catholic lords are incorrigible: ‘Devoted to the Popish superstition, submissive to all the dictates of their priests, and buoyed up with hopes and promises of foreign aid, the three earls [Angus, Huntly and Errol, the guilty parties in this particular Catholic upheaval] continued their treasonable correspondence with the court of Spain’ (*S III*: 108). James’s continued leniency to Catholic rebels exasperates the Presbyterian clergy, who stir up anti-Catholic feeling, appoint ministers to a standing council in Edinburgh, and ‘vested in this body the supreme authority, by enjoining it, in the ancient Roman form, to take care that the church should receive no detriment’ (*S III*: 119). Robertson seems to favour the king when he says that ‘These proceedings, no less unconstitutional than unprecedented,

³⁴ See above, pp. 80-81.

were manifest encroachments on the royal prerogative, and bold steps towards open rebellion' (*S III*: 119). But he at once dilutes this:

The King's conduct, however, justified in some degree such excesses. His lenity towards the Papists, so repugnant to that age; his pardoning the conspirators, notwithstanding repeated promises to the contrary, [...] were circumstances which might have filled minds, not prone by nature to jealousy, with some suspicions; and might have precipitated into rash councils those who were far removed from intemperate zeal (*S III*: 119-120).

Robertson's language, we can see, is more cautious when discussing Presbyterian challenges to James, a Protestant monarch, than when he deals with it in relation to Catholics like the Regent. He is quicker to take the side of law and order. Discussing Presbyterian upheavals in 1584, he even accuses the Presbyterian clergy of trying to acquire an 'exemption from civil jurisdiction [...] which the Popish ecclesiastics, admirable judges of whatever contributed to increase the lustre or power of their body, had long struggled for and had at last attained' (*S II*: 425). However, in the excerpt above, despite cautious language, he calls Presbyterian behaviour justified by royal behaviour. When James finally suppresses the Presbyterians, he again pardons the Catholic lords, who embrace Protestantism. But, Robertson points out, they are beyond redemption: 'not many years after, they relapsed into their former errors, were again reconciled to the church of Rome and by their apostasy justified, in some degree, the fears and scruples of the clergy with regard to their absolution' (*S III*: 132). The Catholic lords are incorrigible, and the Presbyterian ministers are right.

Robertson's views on Catholic resistance raise the matter of his attitude to Catholicism itself. Robertson and the Moderates supported government plans to grant Relief to Scottish Catholics in 1778-1779, and it is generally held that Robertson's support was sincere. Only one scholar, pointing out that the Moderates 'turned out to be woefully inadequate in the relief crisis' has suggested that this might be because

‘they were at bottom unsympathetic to Rome’.³⁵ This description might easily apply to Robertson. His views cannot be judged by his General Assembly speeches on the subject alone. Catholic Relief was a government measure, and Robertson, as leader of the Moderates, was bound to support it in his public capacity. Even in these speeches, there is some ambiguity about his position.

An Act for Catholic Relief in England was passed in the Commons in 1778. Henry Dundas proposed separate Relief legislation for Scotland, because Scottish anti-Catholic laws pre-dated the Union.³⁶ This made it clear that Catholic Relief for Scotland was coming. This is the background to the General Assembly of 1778, when alarmed High-Flyers proposed a standing committee of the Assembly to oppose Relief to Scotland. Robertson spoke against this. The report of his speech in the *Scots Magazine* notes that he gave ‘an historical account of the origins of the law now proposed to be repealed, and shewed that it was [...] a cruel law’.³⁷ Most of the report, however, suggests that Robertson was more worried about the consequences of Relief, than ready to endorse toleration enthusiastically. That this was indeed his attitude is suggested by his later speech in the Assembly of 1779, when he states that, upon first hearing of the Relief plan, he had ‘suspected this motion, for giving relief to Papists to be premature’. Interestingly, one of the reasons he gives for this is fear that the ‘sentiments of those who made this motion might induce them to grant too much’.³⁸ Robertson’s 1778 speech seems largely geared to reassuring the opposition. According to the report, ‘he denied that the Protestant religion was in danger from the bill in question’ and pointed out that ‘the information that the bill was not to extend to

³⁵ Robert Kent Donovan, *No Popery and Radicalism: Opposition to Catholic Relief in Scotland 1778-1782*, (New York and London, 1987), p. 105.

³⁶ Fry, *Dundas Despotism*, pp. 70-71.

³⁷ General Assembly Debates, 28/5/1778, *Scots Magazine*, 40 (1778), 269-270 (p. 270).

³⁸ William Robertson, ‘Speech on Roman Catholic Relief’, in *MWC*, pp. 143-160 (p. 144).

Scotland [...] ought entirely to quiet the minds' of worriers. Robertson was being somewhat devious here; he referred to the English bill, which of course would not cover Scotland, but Dundas had already told the Assembly, that 'he did not doubt, in some future session of parliament, a similar bill might be brought in for this country'.³⁹ Nonetheless, Robertson's interest seems to be as much in allaying Protestant fears, as in championing Relief.

Protestant distaste for Catholic Relief exploded in a riot in Edinburgh in February 1779, during which rioters tried to burn Robertson's house. In his speech in the 1779 assembly, after these events, he abandons support for Relief. This is done ostensibly for pragmatic reasons of public order. Concerning the opposition to Relief, he says that when he 'perceived its extent and violence, my ideas concerning the expediency of extending the repeal of the penal laws to Scotland [...] began to alter'. However, he also seems to reveal his own attitude to Catholicism when he goes on to say that one of the reasons for his original support of Relief was that he thought that 'a fatal blow would have been given to Popery within the British dominions'. Persecution in religious matters, as Robertson knew from history, only strengthens the resolve of the persecuted; toleration may weaken it. He also goes on to say that 'a considerable portion' of opposition 'flowed from the honest zeal of a religious and well-intended people for [...] the Protestant faith'.⁴⁰ Catholic aspirations are treated somewhat dismissively: 'the procuring of [...] relaxation for a handful of Catholics was not an advantage to be put in competition with the imprudence of irritating so great a body of well-affected subjects'. Once again, a favourable view is taken of the *enemies* of Relief.

Robertson ends by proposing a motion to the Assembly that

³⁹ Debates, pp. 269, 270.

⁴⁰ Robertson 'Catholic Relief', p. 149.

The commission appointed by the General Assembly be impowered and enjoined, if any bill shall be brought into Parliament for extending the repeal of the penal statutes against Popery to this country, to empower every legal and proper endeavour to prevent it from being passed into law.

Furthermore, the motion also proposes 'to provide for the better instruction of the people in those corners of the Church where Popery chiefly abounds', which probably means that the anti-Catholic activities of the SSPCK should be increased.⁴¹ As Donovan shows, the SSPCK's war on Catholicism is often overlooked, but it was seen as an important aim.⁴² Robertson seems to encourage it in his Assembly motion. This is somewhat balanced by an assertion that 'the general Assembly is far from [...] desiring that any body of men should be subjected to civil pains and penalties merely on account of religious opinion'.⁴³ The fact remains, however, that Robertson's motion, strictly speaking, leaves Catholics worse off than before.

Smitten believes that Robertson genuinely abandoned Relief on his stated grounds of pragmatism: 'Noble as he considered the principles of toleration [...] Robertson recognized that the extent of popular opposition in Scotland was simply too great for Catholic Relief to be successfully implemented'.⁴⁴ Robertson certainly uses the language of expediency, but, as we can also see, there is in the speech some hint of anti-Catholic feeling and sympathy for the foes of Relief. Robertson's motives for abandoning Relief become more questionable when his treatment of Catholicism in *Scotland* is considered.

Robertson first discusses Catholicism in a digression on the pre-Reformation Church (S I: 356-368). In Scotland, he says, 'that form of Popery which prevailed was of the most bigotted and illiberal kind' (S I: 358). The Church is bloated with wealth:

⁴¹ Robertson, 'Catholic Relief', pp. 151, 159.

⁴² Donovan, pp. 159-162.

⁴³ Robertson, 'Catholic Relief', p. 160.

⁴⁴ Smitten 'Introduction', p. xlv

'The riches of the church all over Europe were exorbitant, but Scotland was one of those countries wherein she had furthest exceeded the just proportion' (S I: 359). The clergy are characterized by 'Immense wealth, extreme indolence, gross ignorance' (S I: 364). Catholic doctrines are ridiculed as 'fables concerning purgatory, the virtues of pilgrimage and the merits of the saints' (S I: 366). So contemptible an institution is ripe for destruction, which Protestants bring about: 'the discourses of the Reformers were listened to as so many calls to liberty' as they expressed 'pious indignation [...] against those corrupt doctrines which had perverted the nature of true Christianity' (S I: 367). Robertson's disdain for Catholicism is stressed by his view of Cardinal Beatoun, the Catholic leader, who possesses 'immoderate ambition' (S I: 308). Beatoun's 'eminence was founded upon the power of the church of Rome', and he is a 'zealous defender of that superstition and [...] an avowed enemy to the doctrine of the Reformers' (S I: 308). When Beatoun is assassinated, Robertson is not really sorry. After describing the murder, Robertson states that the assassins 'delivered their country, though by a most unjustifiable action, from an ambitious man whose pride was insupportable to the nobles, as his cruelty and cunning were great checks to the Reformation' (S I: 327-328). The obligatory remark about 'unjustifiable action' only slightly dilutes Robertson's approval of its results.

Robertson also addresses Catholic politics: 'The genius of Popery is extremely favourable to the power of Princes. The implicit submission to her decrees, which is exacted by the Romish church, prepares and breaks the mind for servitude' (S I: 402). This firmly links Catholicism to despotism. In contrast, 'the doctrines of the Reformers, by overturning the established system of superstition, weakened the firmest foundations of civil tyranny' (S I: 402). Robertson's attitude here needs emphasis, because Kidd insists that Robertson 'undermined the direct connection

traditionally assumed between the ideas of the Reformation and those of political liberty' (*SSP* : 192). In fact, this link, as Moore points out, was important to Robertson.⁴⁵ Kidd prefers to see Robertson giving prominence to 'The Renaissance of classical learning' in creating liberty (*SSP* : 192). Robertson does allow for this: 'A new study [...] added greater force to the spirit of liberty. Men became more acquainted with the Greek and Roman authors, who described exquisite models of free government' (*S I*: 402). However, Robertson sees the 'spirit of liberty' already in place due to Protestantism; classical learning only 'added greater force' to it. This is the whole of Robertson's interest in the Renaissance—that it contributed to the Reformation. He blends the Renaissance with Protestantism by pointing out that many Reformers 'were themselves considerable masters in ancient learning; and all of them eagerly adopted the maxims and spirit of the ancients, with regard to government' (*S I*: 403). Even though he allows a place for classical learning, he does not play down the link between Protestantism and liberty, about which he is clear: 'The most ardent love of liberty accompanied the Protestant religion [...] wherever it was embraced, it roused an independent spirit which rendered men attentive to their privileges as subjects, and jealous of the encroachments of their sovereigns' (*S I*: 403).

Kidd's assertion that Robertson 'unreservedly' condemned destruction wrought by Protestants during the Reformation is also mistaken (*SSP*: 196). In fact, Robertson excuses Protestant conduct. 'We are apt', he writes, 'at this distance, to condemn the furious zeal of the Reformers, and to regret the overthrow of so many stately fabrics' (*S I*: 405). This is hardly unreserved condemnation, because it implies that sixteenth-century behaviour cannot be judged by eighteenth-century standards. Robertson goes on to say that in 'a Reformation carried on in opposition to legal authority, some

⁴⁵ Moore, p. 413.

irregularities were unavoidable' (S I: 405). Even with the cautious language, Robertson clearly sees the 'irregularities' as necessary. The 'legal authority' is, after all, the Regent's, and we have seen what Robertson thought of that. He continues in this vein, avoiding outright approval, but giving an explanation which has a similar effect. 'The abuses and corruption', he states, 'which had crept into the worship of that church [i.e., the Catholic] excited more universal disgust' (S I: 406). He points out that the early Church tended to 'imitate the heathens in the pomp and magnificence of their ceremonies', so that 'To the pure and simple worship of the primitive Christians, there succeeded a species of splendid idolatry' (S I: 406). Obviously, the Protestants wished to destroy the symbols of near-heathenism:

The contrariety of such observances to the spirit of Christianity, was almost the first thing in the Romish system, which awakened the indignation of the Reformers, who, applying to these the denunciations in the Old Testament against idolatry, imagined that they could not endeavour at suppressing them with too much zeal (S I: 406).

Robertson shows the pre-Reformation Church as so corrupt that destruction seems warranted. Furthermore, the outlook of the Reformers is grounded in Scripture. There is no sign of Kidd's 'unreserved' condemnation, and even Kidd admits that Robertson saw destruction as inevitable in the case of a Reformation carried on against government wishes (SSP: 196). Geoffrey Carnall gets closer to the truth by recognizing that Robertson approves of the Protestant spirit of liberty, and that, if this 'enlarged and generous spirit found its immediate expression in [...] violence committed on churches and monasteries, Robertson does not flinch'.⁴⁶ Carnall does not, however, notice Robertson's grounding of Protestant action in Scripture, which is vital when considering his views on 'Presbyterian political theory'. Significantly, Robertson brings out the Bible again in describing the deposition of Mary of Guise:

⁴⁶ Geoffrey Carnall, 'Historical Writing in the Later Eighteenth Century', in *The History of Scottish Literature*, ed. by Cairns Craig et al., 4 vols, (Aberdeen, 1988), II, pp. 207-218, (p. 211).

Knox and Willox [...] pronounced, without hesitation, both from the precepts and examples of Scripture, that it was lawful for subjects not only to resist tyrannical Princes, but to deprive them of that authority, which, in their hands, becomes an instrument for destroying those whom the almighty ordained them to protect. The decision of persons revered so highly for [...] their zeal and their piety, had great weight with the whole assembly (S I: 425-426).

Again, there is no open approval, but the invocation of Scripture, the godly language and the admiring descriptions of Knox and Willox seem to point to where Robertson's sympathies lie. He appears to support, by implication, Knox's theory about resistance to ungodly rulers. In fact, he makes Knox seem more radical than he really was. Knox had, a year previously, developed a theory that the Scottish nobility were 'appointed to be as bridles to repress the rage and insolence of your kings whensoever they pretend manifestly to transgress God's blessed ordinance'.⁴⁷ As Burns and Mason point out, however, Knox did not use this argument at the Regent's deposition.⁴⁸ By Knox's own account, he took a conciliatory line, even allowing for the restoration of the Regent if she repented.⁴⁹ Robertson, however, suggests that he took a far sterner line. Knox is less drastic than Buchanan, who advocated a secular right to resist, rather than a religious duty.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, he did promote resistance, and Robertson's apparent approval of this, and the suggestion that he found Knox's actual conduct insufficiently firm, somewhat contradicts generally held views about Robertson's political outlook and view of the Presbyterian past. As Skinner points out, the origins of Covenanting

⁴⁷ John Knox, 'The Appellation of John Knox from the cruel and most unjust sentence pronounced against him by the false bishops and clergy of Scotland, with his supplication and exhortation to the nobility, estates and commonalty of the same realm', in *John Knox on Rebellion*, ed. by Roger A. Mason, (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 72-114 (p. 102).

⁴⁸ Mason, 'Introduction' in *Knox on Rebellion*, pp. viii-xxiv (p. xxi); Burns, *True Law*, pp. 163-164.

⁴⁹ Knox, *Reformation*, I, pp. 250-251.

⁵⁰ On the resistance theories of Knox and Buchanan, see Burns, *True Law*, pp. 133-136, 145, 148-151, 164-165, 196, 203-209; Skinner, *Foundations*, II, pp. 228-229, 236, 340-343; Robert M. Kingdon, 'Calvinism and Resistance Theory 1550-1580', in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*, ed. by J.H. Burns and Mark Goldie, (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 193-218, (pp. 197-198, 215-218).

can be partly traced to Knox.⁵¹ Robertson's apparent approval therefore has great significance.

Robertson's view of Catholicism has been interpreted as 'enlightened' disdain for Catholic superstition rather than Protestant dislike of Popery.⁵² Hume and Voltaire, after all, also attacked Catholic superstition and corruption. The difference is that Hume and Voltaire are as severe on Protestantism as on Catholicism. As 'enlightened' thinkers, they condemned anything they saw as religious absurdity. Voltaire attacks abuses in the pre-Reformation Church, of which 'some were shocking and others ridiculous', but also savages Calvin for burning the Socinian Servetus and sneers at the Scottish Reformation, saying that Scots should have 'applied themselves to the improvement of their barren country' rather than fighting about religion.⁵³ Hume points out that 'The first reformers, who made such furious and successful attacks on the Popish SUPERSTITION' were 'universally inflamed with the highest ENTHUSIASM'. In two controversial passages, he casts a critical eye over both Protestant enthusiasm and Catholic superstition.⁵⁴ As Todd says, Hume, in these passages, 'is quite even-handed in his censure'.⁵⁵ This description can never be applied to Robertson. He quite clearly attacks all aspects of Catholicism, while praising Protestantism and trying to justify Protestant actions as much as possible. It is logical to think that a writer who states that 'Popery is a species of false religion' (S II: 143)—using the present tense, so that his views cannot be held to apply only to history—does not think highly of Popery. Considering the frequency of such views in *Scotland*, and the ambiguity in his speech of 1779, could Robertson have been sincere

⁵¹ Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2nd edition, 2 vols, (Cambridge, 1979), II: *The Age of Reformation*, pp. 236-237.

⁵² See above, pp. 7-8, 12.

⁵³ Voltaire, *Essay*, II, pp. 288, 311-312, 332.

⁵⁴ David Hume, *History of Great Britain*, ed. by Duncan Forbes, (London, 1970), pp. 71, 72-73, 96-99.

⁵⁵ William B. Todd, 'Foreword', in Hume, *History*, I, pp. xi-xxiii, (p. xviii).

in his support for Catholic Relief? Donovan states that 'Robertson and his colleagues [...] agreed to live with Roman Catholicism even though they disliked and feared it'.⁵⁶ This probably comes closest to the truth, but would Robertson have 'agreed to live with' Catholicism had it not been required by government policy? He showed little interest in Catholics' problems before 1778. In *Scotland* there is only one feeble hint of a tolerance, in a description of a Scottish law forbidding Catholic worship: 'Such strangers were men at that time to the spirit of toleration [...] and with such indecent haste did the very persons who had just escaped the rigour of ecclesiastical tyranny, proceed to emulate those examples of severity of which they themselves had so justly complained' (*S II*: 32-33). Compared to the attacks on the 'false religion' throughout the work, this tolerant gesture is minimal.

Mark Goldie has shown that Robertson was on friendly terms with the Catholic bishop John Geddes, assisting him in helping a Catholic whose inheritance was challenged by a Protestant relative. However, Robertson and Geddes had a common interest; Geddes was also a historian.⁵⁷ Furthermore, he was a useful man to know, considering Robertson's pursuit of literary reputation. Geddes wrote on Spanish history, and his clerical status gave him connections in Spain. Goldie points out that it was probably due to Geddes that the Historical Academy of Madrid sent Robertson a congratulatory letter on *Charles V*, even though it was on the Vatican's Index of prohibited books.⁵⁸ Robertson's friendship with Geddes was therefore perhaps not entirely disinterested. That *Charles V* was on the Index raises more questions about Robertson's view of Catholicism in any case. Furthermore, friendship with a Catholic cleric does not denote approval of Catholicism. Robertson

⁵⁶ Donovan, p. 107.

⁵⁷ Mark Goldie, 'The Scottish Catholic Enlightenment', *Journal of British Studies*, 30 (1991), 20-62, (pp. 47-47, 51-54).

⁵⁸ Goldie, p. 54.

was Hume's friend; this does not mean that he condoned Hume's infidelity.⁵⁹ Ulterior motives are also possible in Robertson's startling reference to 'my Brother, the Archbishop of Toledo' in a letter to the British Ambassador in Spain. Robertson wished to know about 'collections of American curiosities' in the Archbishop's possession, presumably in connection with his own American researches, and his literary needs may have influenced his language, even though the letter is not to the Archbishop personally.⁶⁰

Donovan makes an important point when he shows how anti-Relief campaigners gleefully quoted the anti-Catholic sentiments in Robertson's works in their pamphlets.⁶¹ The question arises whether an astute politician like Robertson would have willingly left himself open to such attacks by supporting Relief. Robertson has been called a man who 'never made a blunder'.⁶² His enemy Gilbert Stuart said that Robertson 'is fond of the reputation of Subtilty, and he has obtained it'.⁶³ Supporting Relief when he was a known anti-Catholic writer, however, looks like an egregious blunder; there is nothing 'subtil' about it. Robertson's conduct suggests either a staggering naiveté, or, more likely, that he acted against his own inclination due to his Moderate political obligations. There is of course the possibility that Robertson's views on Catholicism had softened between the writing of *Scotland* and 1778, but his Glorious Revolution sermon argues against this; it praises the Revolution because it saved 'the nation from the re-establishment of a Sect, which, in consequence of its pretensions to infallibility, is of all others most hostile to the rights

⁵⁹ See above, p. 62.

⁶⁰ Robertson to Lord Grantham, 30/9/1776, Jeremy Black, 'The Enlightenment Historian at Work: The Researches of William Robertson', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 65 (1988), 251-260, (p. 255).

⁶¹ Donovan, p. 107.

⁶² Henry Grey Graham, 'Principal Robertson', in *Scottish Men of Letters in the Eighteenth Century*, (London, 1908), pp. 78-103, (p. 78).

⁶³ [Gilbert Stuart], *Character of a certain Popular Historian, now Ministerial Agent for Reconciling our complaisant Clergy to the Church of Rome; From the Writings of a Celebrated Philosopher, now Deceased*, (Edinburgh, 1779), p. 1.

of conscience'. Again, Robertson uses the present tense; he cannot be held to be referring simply to the situation of 1688. Admittedly, Robertson goes on to speak favourably of religious tolerance, praising the Revolution for 'an express law [...] to authorise those who could not with a good conscience conform to the established Church, to serve God in the way they thought most acceptable to him without fear'.⁶⁴ Robertson, however, as a historian, knew that the toleration resulting from the Revolution was limited. The Revolution enabled the establishment of Presbyterianism in Scotland and the Toleration Act of 1689 granted some rights to English Dissenters, but Catholics were excluded from toleration in this Act. If anything, the Revolution made their lot worse, because their religion was associated with Jacobitism. When Robertson speaks of toleration in his 1788 sermon, he is, in fact, only referring to toleration for Protestants. Likewise, when Robertson praises 'those liberal regulations concerning Toleration which exalt the name of the Emperor' in a letter to the British Ambassador in Vienna, he is again referring to toleration for Protestants, recently granted by Emperor Joseph II. Besides, Robertson's praise is not disinterested. As the letter shows, he was enquiring about the possibility of finding his son a commission in the Austrian army, which it was now possible for a Protestant to hold.⁶⁵

Considering all the factors I have dealt with, it can at least be suggested that Robertson's support of Relief in 1778 was not based on conviction, but on the Moderate obligation to government. His retirement shortly after the Relief crisis may have been due to what the crisis revealed: that Robertson's system of balancing 'Scottish' Presbyterian independence and tradition against the demands of government was unsustainable.

⁶⁴ Robertson, 'Revolution', p. 182.

⁶⁵ Robertson to Sir Robert Murray Keith, 12/5/1785, *Hardwicke Papers*, Add. MS 35534, f. 123, BL.

3) Mary, Queen of Scots

Robertson's treatment of Queen Mary both annoyed her partisans and bewildered her critics. In writing about her, he entered a minefield. Allan identifies Mary as a Scottish historical preoccupation that continued into the eighteenth century (*VZ*: 166, 168), and indeed Mary had been argued over since Buchanan's day. Whigs and Presbyterians generally supported the hostile Buchananite view of Mary, and the resistance theory associated with it, while Jacobites championed Mary and absolutism. The controversy was revived in 1715 when the Jacobite Thomas Ruddiman produced an edition of Buchanan's *Omnia Opera*, or complete works, with, as Kidd discusses, an introduction attacking Buchanan's historical reliability and political stance (*SSP*: 92-93). As O'Brien points out, the subject continued to be debated by Whigs and Jacobites throughout the early eighteenth century (*NE*: 114-115). In 1754, another Jacobite, Walter Goodall, produced an *Examination of the Casket Letters*—a collection of letters allegedly from Mary to Bothwell proving her involvement in Bothwell's murder of her husband Darnley. The authenticity of these letters was a crucial issue; Goodall naturally took the view that they were forgeries made to incriminate Mary.⁶⁶

Robertson's *Scotland*, which appeared in 1759, used both Jacobite and Whig sources. This creates an appearance of impartiality, but broadly, Robertson sticks to the Whig-Presbyterian position when dealing with Mary while she is still ruling Scotland. However, after Mary is deposed and a prisoner in England, he becomes far more favourable to her. This is illustrated by the fact that he accepts Mary's complicity in the murder of her husband, Darnley, while she is Queen, but absolves her of guilt in the Babington Plot to assassinate Elizabeth, which occurs while she is a

⁶⁶ Laurence L. Bongie, 'The Eighteenth-Century Marian Controversy and an Unpublished Letter by David Hume', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 1 (1964), 256-263, (p. 257).

prisoner. In this he differs markedly from Hume, who sees her as guilty in both the Darnley and Babington affairs.⁶⁷

Robertson's treatment of Mary's reign has been straightforwardly dealt with by Moore.⁶⁸ However, more examination is needed in order to emphasize Robertson's Tacitean literary strategy. In dealing with Mary, he not only had to consider his general readership and their political prejudices, but also that Mary was an iconic figure to many Scots. Nonetheless, it is clear that Robertson finds Mary too Catholic, foreign, and despotic to be a Scottish ruler.

Robertson's view of her religious affinities is clear:

She had never once consented to hear any preacher of the reformed doctrine. She had abated nothing of her bigotted attachment to the Romish faith [and] had given her friends on the Continent repeated assurances of her resolution to re-establish the Catholic faith (*S II*: 108).

The association of Catholicism with foreign threat is maintained throughout. Mary, says Robertson,

was deeply tinctured with all the prejudices of popery; a passionate attachment to that superstition is visible in every part of her character [...] she was devoted, too, with the utmost submission to the Princes of Lorrain, her uncles, and had been accustomed from her infancy to listen to all their advices (*S II*: 143).

Motivated by 'The prospect of restoring [...] her own religion, the pleasure of complying with her uncles, and the hopes of gratifying the French monarch', Mary attacks Protestantism (*S II*: 144). 'To this fatal resolution' writes Robertson, 'may be imputed all the subsequent calamities of Mary's life' (*S II*: 144). Moore is plainly correct to say that Robertson's 'distrust of Catholicism [...] led him to believe that Catholic monarchs were especially dangerous'.⁶⁹ This should be taken further.

Robertson sees Catholicism and despotism as inextricably entwined, so that he cannot,

⁶⁷ Hume, *History*, IV, pp. 86, 227, 390-393, 397-401.

⁶⁸ Moore, pp. 402-482.

⁶⁹ Moore, p. 491.

in his histories, imagine a Catholic ruler who is not despotic. Furthermore, Catholicism is connected with *foreign* despotism. This patriotic connection of despotism with foreignness is already stressed in the sixteenth century, as Williamson points out, by the title of Buchanan's political treatise, *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*: or 'The Powers of the Crown *in Scotland*' (my emphasis). In writing it, Buchanan not only attacked despotism, he tried to 'define a specifically Scottish political culture'.⁷⁰ It is Scotland's unique constitution, Buchanan emphasizes, that enables Scots to unite against foreign threats.⁷¹ To Buchanan, and Robertson, despotism is un-Scottish as well as unpleasant.

Robertson sees despotic tendencies in Mary. After marrying Henry Darnley, she proclaims him King, against constitutional practice:

That she had no right to confer upon him, by her private authority, the title and dignity of King, or by a simple proclamation to raise her husband to be the master of her people seems to be beyond all doubt [...] Such a violent and unprecedented stretch of prerogative, as the substituting a proclamation in place of an act of parliament, might justly have alarmed the nation (*S* II: 129-130).

The Earl of Moray, Mary's bastard brother who objects to the marriage, is then persecuted. The result is armed conflict, which Mary wins. More evidence of Mary's despotism is provided by her use of a standing army in this affair, and the financial exactions that maintain it (*S* II: 136). Mary resorts arbitrarily screws money out of her subjects to maintain the army, which, Robertson notes approvingly, is resisted when Mary demands money from Edinburgh:

This unprecedented exaction alarmed the citizens. They had recourse to delays; and started difficulties, in order to evade it. These Mary construed to be acts of avowed disobedience, and instantly committed several of them to prison. But this severity did not subdue the undaunted spirit of liberty which prevailed among the inhabitants (*S* II: 136-137).

⁷⁰ Williamson, 'National Consciousness', pp. 109, 111.

⁷¹ Buchanan, *Powers*, pp. 148-150.

Robertson follows 'Scottish' tradition closely here; both Buchanan and Fletcher, citing Buchanan, criticize Mary in connection with standing armies.⁷²

As Robertson plainly thinks that Mary's actions make her a bad ruler, it is unsurprising that he cautiously takes the Whig-Presbyterian position regarding the Darnley murder. 'The Queen's known sentiments regarding her husband'—whom, according to Robertson, she detested (*S* II: 189-190)—'gave a great appearance of probability to the imputation with which she was loaded' (*S* II: 195). As the Darnley issue was important, Robertson attached to the second and subsequent editions of *Scotland* a 'Critical Dissertation concerning the Murder of King Henry and the Genuineness of the Queen's Letters to Bothwell' (*S* III: 201-270). In this he uses another Tacitean tactic to create an appearance of impartiality while pointing to his own convictions. In this tactic, the pros and cons of a person or situation are apparently considered impartially. Tacitus's view of Augustus is an example. Stating that 'there was much discussion of Augustus' after his death, Tacitus then considers what he claims people said were the Emperor's good points, followed by what was said concerning his bad ones. The second section is twice as long as the first, and more vehement.⁷³ The reader who sees through Tacitus's pose of impartiality can easily assume that Tacitus's opinion of Augustus is more 'con' than 'pro'. This is similar to Robertson's practice in the 'Dissertation'. He presents the views of the two main parties: 'The one supposes Bothwell to have contrived and executed this crime [i.e.: the Whig and Presbyterian view]. The other imputes it to the earls of Murray, Morton and their party [i.e.: the Jacobite view]' (*S* III: 202-204). Robertson then summarizes the two positions, the 'Bothwell' view first. The 'Bothwell' evidence takes two pages;

⁷² Buchanan, *History*, pp. 285-286; Fletcher, 'Discourse', pp. 10-11.

⁷³ Tacitus, *The Annals of Imperial Rome*, ed. and trans. by Michael Grant, revised edn, (London, 1989), pp. 37-39.

the 'Moray' evidence only slightly over half a page. Further clues to Robertson's opinion appear in the paragraph after the summaries:

The former of these systems has an air of probability, is consistent with itself and solves appearances. In the latter, some assertions are false, some links are wanting in the chain, and effects appear, of which no sufficient cause is produced (*S III: 204*).

Robertson plainly inclines to the 'Bothwell' view. He also considers Goodall's argument about the Casket Letters being forgeries (*S III: 242-262*). Again, his own view is hinted at right at the end of this consideration: 'from this short review of our author's proof of the forgery of the letters to Bothwell, it is evident that his arguments are far from amounting to demonstration' (*S III: 262*).

At the end of the 'Dissertation, Robertson offers two alternatives. The first is that Mary is not 'guilty of having contrived the murder of her husband [...] but she is not acquitted of having discovered her approbation of the deed, by her behaviour towards him who was the author of it [i.e.: Bothwell]' (*S III: 270*). The second is the one advanced by the Moray faction, that Mary was wholly involved in the murder (*S III: 270*). Robertson offers a choice of guilty or partly guilty, but, significantly, the view that blames Moray for Darnley's murder is not offered as an option.

Robertson also uses Tacitean strategy in dealing with Mary's deposition and with Moray, who leads the confederation that deposes her. The views condemning and justifying the deposition are considered, the first as those of 'the favourers of the Queen' (*S II: 241, 241-242*), and the second as those of 'The partisans of the confederates' (*S II: 242, 242-243*). The summaries are of equal length, and there is no indication of Robertson's opinion except the statement after the summaries, that 'To a great part of the nation, the conduct of the confederates appeared not only wise, but just' (*S II: 243*). If we add to this Robertson's criticism of Mary's Catholic, foreign and despotic leanings, we can reasonably conclude that Robertson also believed in the

wisdom and justice of the deposition. This seems confirmed by Robertson's treatment of Moray. In summing up his character, Robertson, again assumes impartiality, considering Moray's good and bad points (*S II*: 315-316). Among Moray's 'pros' for example, is 'a disinterested passion for the liberty of his country' (*S II*: 315), but among the 'cons' is the point that 'his ambition was immoderate' (*S II*: 316). A final paragraph again points to what is probably Robertson's view:

But amidst the turbulence and confusion of that factious period, he dispensed justice with so much impartiality [...] and established such uncommon order and tranquillity in the country that his administration was extremely popular, and he was long and affectionately remembered among the commons by the name of the *Good Regent* (*S II*: 316).

Robertson's general treatment of Moray must also be considered. When Moray first emerges in the days of the Regent, Robertson praises his 'unquestionable personal courage' and 'sagacity and penetration in civil affairs' together with 'his boldness in defence of the Reformation' (*S I*: 417). During Mary's reign, the Queen's popularity is 'owed in a great measure to Murray, who had directed her administration with great prudence' before he and Mary fell out (*S II*: 128).

Although Robertson is clearly on Moray's side, he is less harsh to Mary than other Scottish Whig-Presbyterian historians. He rejects Buchanan's assertions that Mary planned to destroy Moray in 1562, and that she had an immoral relationship with Rizzio (*S II*: 86, 150). Also, as O'Brien shows, he makes Darnley so despicable that Mary's attachment to Bothwell is almost understandable (*NE*: *S II*: 113-114, 145-147, 194-195). This argues a hint of sympathy for Mary, although Robertson condemns the political and religious principles which she represents. This sympathy is confirmed, as we shall see, by Robertson's account of Mary as an English prisoner. Unsurprisingly, Robertson's treatment of Mary provoked strong reaction. Within a year of *Scotland's* publication, the Jacobite William Tytler produced a counterblast,

reasserting the falseness of the Casket Letters.⁷⁴ John Wesley did not go into print, but his diaries criticize Robertson's treatment of 'that much injured Queen', and praises Tytler's work.⁷⁵ Wesley's objections may have been political. Jonathan Clark has shown how Wesley was influenced by Oxford Jacobitism, and retained principles about non-resistance throughout his life, though applying them to the Hanoverians.⁷⁶ With such views, it is not surprising that he disapproved of Robertson's treatment of Mary. Another Englishman, John Whitaker, also disapproved. Accusing Robertson of a 'steady attachment to the cause of rebellion', he championed Mary in three volumes.⁷⁷

Attacks on Robertson's view of Mary from Jacobites and advocates of non-resistance are logical; this cannot be said of those made by the Whigs Gilbert Stuart and the Earl of Buchan. Both them had personal grudges against Robertson, so their attacks cannot be taken as serious ideological ones. Stuart believed that Robertson had obstructed his attempt obtain a professorship at Edinburgh University in 1777.⁷⁸ There had been no ill feeling before that year. Robertson, in 1769, praised Stuart's writing and called him 'a modest, ingenious and high spirited young man'.⁷⁹ Stuart wrote favourably of Robertson and his party in descriptions of General Assembly debates.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ William Tytler, *An Inquiry, Historical and Critical, into the Evidence against Mary, Queen of Scots, and an Examination of the Histories of Dr Robertson and Mr Hume, with Respect to that Evidence*, 4th edition, 2 vols, (London, 1790), I, pp. 188-233.

⁷⁵ John Wesley, *Works of John Wesley*, 14 vols, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1958), III, pp. 317-318, 383.

⁷⁶ J.C.D. Clark, *English Society 1688-1832: Ideology, Social Structure and Political Practice during the Ancien Regime*, (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 235-236.

⁷⁷ John Whitaker, *Mary, Queen of Scots Vindicated*, 3 vols, (London, 1788), III, p. 6.

⁷⁸ William B. Zachs, *Without Regard to Good Manners: A Biography of Gilbert Stuart 1743-1786*, (Edinburgh, 1992), pp. 105-107.

⁷⁹ Robertson to Hume, 31/1/1769, in Richard B. Sher and M. Stewart, 'William Robertson and David Hume: Three Letters', *Hume Studies*, 11 (1985), 69-86 (p. 76).

⁸⁰ [Gilbert Stuart], 'Account of the Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, by a Person who attended and took Notes', *Edinburgh Magazine and Review*, 3 (1775), 356-365, 409-420 (pp. 364, 365).

However, after failing to get the University post, Stuart attacked Robertson. Writing on Scottish constitutional history, he describes Robertson as 'fond of tenets that are slavish and ignoble' and implies that he is 'a propagator of high principles of monarchy'. Whiggish views did not, however, prevent him from championing Mary, stating that the Casket Letters were forgeries, severely condemning Knox and issuing a 'call upon Dr Robertson to defend or to renounce his opinions concerning the honour and character of Queen Mary'.⁸¹

Buchan's grudge against Robertson was caused by Robertson's opposition to his attempts to obtain a royal charter for his Scottish Society of Antiquaries.⁸² Describing a confrontation with Robertson over this issue, Buchan accuses him of writing 'Apologies for Tyranny', and calls him a 'Court Chaplain' and a member of 'a Junto of Tories and Jacobites'.⁸³ Buchan himself, however, adopted the Jacobite view of Mary as a patriotic symbol and accused Robertson of 'extenuation of the ungenerous conduct of Elizabeth' towards her'.⁸⁴

Besides personal grudges, the illogicality of such attacks can be explained by the ages of the attackers. Buchan was born in 1742, Stuart in 1743. Neither could remember Jacobitism as a political threat or realize what Mary represented to her earlier detractors. This is emphasized by Buchan's admiration for a genuine Scottish patriotic figure, Fletcher of Saltoun.⁸⁵ Fletcher criticized Mary's despotism in his

⁸¹ Gilbert Stuart, *History of Scotland*, I, pp. 354-395; II, pp. 73-77; II, Appendix I: 'Observations concerning the Public Law and the Constitutional History of Scotland, with Occasional Remarks concerning English Antiquity', pp. 73, 80-82, 88, 106, 109, 110-112, 119, 127, 129-139; Stuart to Buchan, 10/4/1783, in II, Appendix II, pp. 152-153.

⁸² Steven Shapin, 'Property, Patronage and the Politics of Science: The Founding of the Royal society of Edinburgh', *British Journal for the History of Science*, 7 (1974), 1-41, (pp. 27-29).

⁸³ Buchan to William Charles Little, 26/11/1782, Gen 1429/16/4, ff. 3,4,5, EUL.

⁸⁴ Buchan to Stuart, 18/4/1783, in Stuart, *History of Scotland*, II, Appendix II, p. 158.

⁸⁵ Bruce P. Lenman, 'Aristocratic "Country" Whiggery in Scotland and the American Revolution', in *Scotland and America in the Age of Enlightenment*, ed. by Richard B. Sher and Jeffrey Smitten, (Edinburgh, 1980), pp. 180-192, (pp. 184-185).

writings.⁸⁶ Buchan, however, was somehow able to reconcile apparently conflicting views and see both as Scottish patriotic figures. Robertson, as we shall see, also does this, but Buchan's admiration for Mary is indiscriminate, while Robertson's is not, so that Robertson's admiration for both Fletcher and Mary is logical. This championship of Mary by Scottish Whigs shows perceptions of Scottish history already degenerating into the quaintness and romanticism which Fry and Ash describe as dominant in nineteenth-century Scotland.⁸⁷ Robertson, on the other hand, was old enough to remember 1745, when he had volunteered to fight the Jacobites, and might have found such attitudes problematic. This is probably why he sticks to his ingrained 'Scottish' Whig view when dealing with Mary while she still holds dangerous power, before her deposition. Stuart and Buchan, for whom the Jacobite threat was only a historical phenomenon, could take Mary's side *before* the deposition. This what differentiates Robertson's history from Stuart's.

Robertson's treatment of Mary after her deposition is sympathetic. According to O'Brien, Robertson's general sympathy to Mary is part of an attempt to strip her of political significance by sentimentalizing her (*NE*: 117-122). However, Robertson's rejection of the Jacobite political position is clear in his Whiggish treatment of her while she is Queen; no sentimentalization is required. O'Brien appears confused when she says that Robertson is trying to show his readers that 'the independent Catholic Scotland which she [i.e., Mary] represents can never be revived' and that he does this by reducing Mary to sentimental irrelevance (*NE*: 119). But Robertson does not associate Catholicism with an independent Scotland; it is Mary's French/Catholic connections that, to him, threaten Scottish independence.⁸⁸ Other reasons must be

⁸⁶ See above, p. 142.

⁸⁷ See above, pp. 20-21.

⁸⁸ See above, pp. 140-141.

found for Robertson's sympathetic treatment of Mary, especially after her deposition. O'Brien sees in it the beginning of 'a long tradition of purely aesthetic and literary Jacobitism in Scotland', a sort of exercise in sentimentality. It is questionable whether Robertson could really have sentimentalized Jacobitism. His 1788 sermon, with its denunciations of Popery and absolutism suggests that he remained aware of the threat that Jacobitism had posed.

The disappearance of Jacobitism as a serious threat after 1745 did undoubtedly, as Kidd says, cause a Scottish Whig historians to take a more relaxed attitude to Jacobite historiography, and to see it as valid source material for their own works (SSP: 97). Robertson could accept Innes's demolition of Scotland's traditional early kings, or Abercromby's patriotic disapproval of rebellious nobles who sided with England in James III's day. This does not imply that he accepted the absolutist principles of Abercromby or Innes. Neither does it mean that he took a sentimental view of Jacobitism generally. The illogical Whig sympathy with Jacobite idols like Mary seems to be the preserve of later generations of Scots, who never knew a real Jacobite threat. Kidd locates it in Buchan, Stuart and Robert Burns, but not in Robertson.⁸⁹

In O'Brien's view, Robertson believed that 'Scotland's destiny is English and Protestant, not French and Roman Catholic' (NE: 119). Certainly, he did not want Scotland to be French and Catholic. But he did not want it to be English either. This is plain from his criticism of the anti-Marian nobles for their allegiance to England during Mary's reign.⁹⁰ In the post-1745 climate, he was able to do this while simultaneously denouncing Mary on Whig Presbyterian grounds for her Frenchness

⁸⁹ Colin Kidd, 'The Rehabilitation of Scottish Jacobitism', *Scottish Historical Review*, 77 (1998), 58-76 (pp. 71-72).

⁹⁰ See above, p. 113.

and Catholicism, thus creating a patriotic unity. Strong patriotism is after all common to both Jacobites and Whigs in Scotland. The difference is that Jacobites identified Scotland with the monarchy, while Whigs often saw monarchs as its enemies.

Robertson's chief Jacobite critic, Tytler, states that writers 'averse to monarchy and to the house of Stuart' attack Mary, while 'writers attached to the ancient constitution of their country, and to the family of Stuart' defend her. In Tytler's view, Scotland's ancient constitution 'was from very remote antiquity monarchical and hereditary'.⁹¹

Scottish patriotism is firmly linked to the Stuart dynasty and the Jacobite principle of indefeasible hereditary monarchy. Robertson naturally has a different view of Scotland's historical constitution. Discussing the sixteenth-century exclusion of the Earl of Arran's son from the Scottish succession, Robertson points out that by this exclusion, 'the order of lineal succession was [...] broken.' (*S I*: 334). He explicitly rejects the historical legitimacy of Jacobite views, stating that 'the modern theories, which represent this right as divine and unalienable [...] seem to have been then altogether unknown' (*S I*: 334).

However, in his treatment of Mary after deposition has lessened the threat she poses to Scotland, Robertson temporarily adopts the Jacobite view of her as a patriotic symbol. This is already hinted at in his treatment of Moray. As I have discussed, Robertson's view of this earl is largely admiring, but it agrees with the thoroughly hostile view of the Jacobite Tytler in one critical point; that Moray's rule saw Scotland dominated by England.⁹² His treatment of Mary in captivity is not merely sentimental, but has a patriotic purpose. Mary does not suffer in a vacuum. Her suffering is caused by Queen Elizabeth. Walpole noticed this when he wrote that Robertson 'has diverted indignation from her [i.e., Mary] by his art in raising up [...] resentment against her

⁹¹ Tytler, I, pp. 35-36, 37.

⁹² Tytler, II, p. 223; see above, p. 113.

perescutress'.⁹³ Robertson's position, however, goes beyond pity for Mary. Having stuck to Whig patriotic views on Mary to criticize French domination, Robertson then takes a Jacobitish position to attack English pretensions in the person of Elizabeth by criticizing her treatment of Mary. This view would seem to be supported by the fact that Tytler, who severely criticizes Robertson over the Casket Letters and his treatment of Mary while she is Queen, actually cites Robertson in support for his own account of Elizabeth's malevolence towards Mary in captivity.⁹⁴ Jeffrey Smitten's view is that Robertson's treatment of Elizabeth and Mary is simply 'the familiar eighteenth-century contrast of the warm but untutored heart opposed to the cold but prudent head [...] scrupulously balanced to create a demanding perplexity'.⁹⁵ This again suggests the aesthetic approach and also that Robertson took a truly balanced view of the two Queens. However Robertson clearly sees the English Queen as villainous and her treatment of Mary as wrong, and this attitude is partly grounded in patriotism.

This emerges most clearly in his handling of the Babington plot to assassinate Elizabeth. Robertson is convinced that Mary is not involved. This idea is cooked up by Elizabeth's ministers, who 'wished to persuade the nation that Babington and his associates should be considered merely as instruments employed by the Queen of Scots' (S III: 37). Elizabeth encourages this because she fears the results of her own treatment of Mary in England:

The more numerous the injuries which Elizabeth had heaped on Mary, the more she feared and hated that unhappy Queen, and came at last to be persuaded that there could be no other security for her own life, but the death of her rival (S III: 39).

⁹³ Walpole to David Dalrymple, 3/2/1760, in *Walpole's Correspondence*, XV, p. 62.

⁹⁴ Tytler, II, pp. 318, 319; see above, p. 144-145.

⁹⁵ Jeffrey Smitten, 'Robertson's *History of Scotland*: Narrative Structure and the Sense of Reality', *CLIO*, 11 (1981), 29-47, (p. 40).

She resolves to put Mary on trial, a process which, to Robertson, is politically and legally unheard-of:

It was in vain to search the ancient records for any statute or precedent to justify such an uncommon step, as the trial of a foreign Prince who had not entered the kingdom in arms, but had fled thither for refuge (S III: 41).

To Robertson, an English monarch has no right to try a Scottish one. The important factor here is Robertson's patriotic indignation, not a sentimental fondness for Mary.

This emerges even more strongly after Mary has been found guilty:

It is no easy matter to determine whether the injustice in appointing this trial, or the irregularities in conducting it were greatest and most flagrant. By what right did Elizabeth claim authority over an independent Queen? Was Mary to comply with the laws of a foreign kingdom? How could the subjects of another Prince become her judges? (S III: 48-49).

Robertson's concern goes beyond Mary herself. In question here, by implication, is the ancient matter of whether Scotland is subordinate to England and bound by its laws. By trying an 'independent Queen', Elizabeth implicitly takes the position of Edward I regarding Scotland's status, and this Robertson rejects. O'Brien notes that Robertson 'angrily questions the justice of the trial', but misses the patriotic implications of Robertson's anger (*NE*: 117). These implications are again plain in Robertson's description of James VI's protest against his mother's trial: his ambassadors 'remonstrated in the strongest terms, against the injury done to an independent Queen, in subjecting her to be tried [...] by laws to which she owed no obedience' (S III: 54).

Robertson does admittedly give an emotional description of Mary's death, which was sufficiently sentimental to inspire Boswell to have a picture of the scene painted.⁹⁶ He also shows Elizabeth as personally 'wicked' as well as an enemy to

⁹⁶ James Boswell, *Boswell: The English Experiment 1785-1789*, ed. by Irma S. Lustig and F.A. Pottle, (London, 1986), p. 28.

Scotland. She jokes as she signs Mary's death warrant (*S III*: 59). She tries to spare herself the controversy that would arise from Mary's execution by inciting Mary's gaoler to kill her quietly (*S III*: 59-60). After Mary's death, she indulges in fits of feigned mourning (*S III*: 68-69). However, in his final summing up of Elizabeth, he returns to political, patriotic concerns.

Robertson had to be extremely Tacitean here. He knew that 'The memory of Elizabeth is still adored in England' (*S III*: 180). A plainly hostile summary would alienate almost all English readers. Robertson's method is to consider first what Elizabeth means to England (*S III*: 180-181), and then what she means to Scotland (*S III*: 181). He states that she is regarded by the English as a heroine, and describes the benefits which the English derived from her reign. 'Such' he ends, 'is the picture which the English draw of this great Queen' (*S III*: 181). Robertson, however, is not English, and there is no suggestion that he shares English views. His own views are hinted at when he discusses Elizabeth's significance to Scotland: 'Whoever undertakes to write the history of Scotland, finds himself obliged, frequently, to view her [...] in a less amiable light' (*S III*: 181). As Robertson is himself writing Scottish history, this provides a clue as to his views. Further clues are evident in the patriotic slant Robertson gives to the Scottish view of Elizabeth: 'she rendered Scotland long the seat of discord, confusion and bloodshed; and her craft and intrigues, effecting what the valour of her ancestors could not accomplish, reduced that kingdom to a state of dependence on England' (*S III*: 181). Elizabeth is here firmly linked to the long history of English attempts to dominate Scotland. Her presuming to try the independent Scottish Queen can be seen as representing to Robertson yet another chapter in that history.

A Scottish reader noticed Robertson's tactics regarding Elizabeth: 'you blame her with the Severity of a Historian, yet in such a manner as not to shock John Bull'.⁹⁷ In fact, this was not the case. Contrary to Buchan's accusation, Robertson did not 'please the English'.⁹⁸ John Bull was not shocked, but he was puzzled, and inclined to attribute Robertson's treatment to historical remissness. Letters arrived from Englishmen and Anglicized 'British' Scots, drawing attention to source material confirming Mary's involvement in the Babington affair, and her immoral attachment to Rizzio.⁹⁹ Hume was not quite 'John Bull' but he firmly believed in Mary guilty of involvement in the assassination plot. As O'Brien says, he 'continued to bombard Robertson with factual information discrediting every aspect of Mary's conduct', (NE: 120).¹⁰⁰

For O'Brien, Robertson's differing treatment of Mary in regard to the Darnley and Babington affairs shows that he 'hoped to demonstrate his own [...] impartiality, and expected that his history would be a locus of agreement for both her partisans and her detractors' (NE : 121). In fact, partisans and detractors agreed only in finding Robertson's history unsatisfactory. The unifying factor in Robertson's apparently contradictory treatment of Mary before and after her deposition is patriotism. This is the only explanation for the seeming contradiction, if we accept that Robertson could not have sentimentalized Jacobitism. If sentiment is discounted, only patriotism remains to explain Robertson's treatment of Mary. This treatment, as I noted above, disturbed Englishmen and Anglicized 'British' Scots, and must at least raise questions about Robertson's own commitment to 'Britishness'. On the other hand, the offence taken by Jacobites and believers in non-resistance must similarly cast doubt on

⁹⁷ Margaret Hepburn? To Robertson, 12/3/1759, *Saltoun Papers*, MS 16521, f. 189, NLS.

⁹⁸ See above, p. 105.

⁹⁹ John Blair to Robertson, 25/1/1759; Birch to Robertson, 8/2/1759, *R-McD*, MS 3942, ff. 7, 17, NLS.

¹⁰⁰ Hume to Robertson, 18/11/1758 and 25/1/1759, in *Letters*, I, pp. 288, 290-291.

Robertson's supposed rejection of old 'Scottish' Whig and Presbyterian principles about monarchy. In conclusion, it can be said that Robertson's attitude in *Scotland* is essentially 'Scottish'—Whig, Presbyterian and defensively patriotic. The treatment of Mary after her deposition complements, rather than contradicts, this picture, because it strengthens the patriotism without detracting from the Whig and Presbyterian principles expressed by Robertson when he describes her actual reign.

CHAPTER V

European History

As the narrative portion of *Charles V* has seldom been dealt with, a consideration of it requires some introduction. Why Robertson chose the subject is fairly obvious, as his interest was in the sixteenth century. Lenman suggests that Robertson abandoned Scottish history because he 'wanted a European audience for his next book', and this was undoubtedly a consideration.¹ However, despite the European subject, Robertson's 'Scottish' values—distrust of monarchical power, defensive patriotism and militant Protestantism—are all evident in *Charles V*. Robertson does not abandon 'Scottish' concerns with the history of Scotland, but takes them into European history. Charles V's reign, which sees the Reformation and the resistance of Charles's despotism in Spain and Germany, is a period to which those concerns are relevant.

Admittedly, a 'cosmopolitan' view is more feasible with regard to *Charles V* than to *Scotland*. The history of Charles V is the history of early sixteenth-century Europe. Charles is a cosmopolitan figure, born in Ghent, ruler of disparate kingdoms. But Robertson *criticizes* Charles and the cosmopolitan disregard he shows for national constitutional liberties. Robertson's 'Scottish' sense of defensive patriotism is particularly evident in *Charles V*. Robertson's view of Charles, as will be seen, definitely contradicts O'Brien's belief that Robertson, having 'bemoaned the fact that [...] Scotland had not taken the painful but necessary road to strong centralized monarchy' believed that 'powerful centralized monarchy was a necessary evil' (NE: 142).

A common view is that Robertson's chief concern in *Charles V* is to show the development of the European balance of power system. Robertson's preface to the

¹ Bruce P. Lenman, 'The Teaching of Scottish History in the Scottish Universities', *Scottish Historical Review*, 52 (1973), 165-190, (p. 171).

work does indeed point out that 'It was during his [i.e., Charles's] administration that the powers of Europe were formed into one great political system, in which each took a station, wherein it has remained' (C I: x). It is true that Robertson, opposed to empire as he was, would have 'set out to defend the balance of power as generally beneficial: as a safeguard against universal empire and despotism', as Frederick Whelan says he and Hume did.² However, the issue does not really arise in Robertson's case. Unlike Hume, Robertson expressly denies that Charles aimed at universal empire: 'there seems to be no foundation for an opinion prevalent in his own age, that he had formed the chimerical project of establishing an universal monarchy in Europe' (C II: 488). That Charles's European adversaries thought this to be his plan is important, as Phillipson says, because their reaction to him led them to act in such a way that the balance of power system arose.³ However, as *Robertson* did not believe in Charles's 'universal monarchy', this cannot explain Robertson's disapproval of Charles's actions, and doubts arise about whether he saw the emergence of the balance of power as of paramount importance. It is what might be called Charles's internal 'imperialism' that Robertson criticizes, his attacks on national constitutions and his attempts to rule without regard to national prejudices.

However, the balance of power view of *Charles V* attracts support because the balance of power is a 'cosmopolitan' concern, and an eighteenth-century interest. This may explain why Robertson, alert to the demands of his readership, stressed it in his preface. The balance of power view enables Pocock to make comparisons with Voltaire,⁴ and O'Brien to say that 'Like *le Siecle de Louis XIV*, Robertson's second history is about a would-be universal monarchy and how it eventually is forced to give

² Frederick G. Whelan, 'Robertson, Hume and the Balance of Power', *Hume Studies*, 21 (1995), 315-332, (p. 325).

³ Phillipson, 'Providence', p. 61, n. 14.

⁴ Pocock, *Barbarism*, II, p. 289.

way to a more viable system of balancing states in Europe' (NE: 130). The development of the balance of power system is *one* feature of Robertson's work, to which, as it was of interest to people who read Voltaire, he might have given some attention. However, it seems secondary in Robertson's view to matters like the Reformation and events in Germany, although it plays a part in such affairs—France, for example, allies with the Protestant German princes against Charles.

Comparison of Robertson's *Charles V* with Voltaire's *Louis XIV* also ignores ideological differences. Voltaire's work is a justification of absolutism in the interests of order and civilization. He approves of the levelling of regional differences:

It is surely desirable that each class should be subject to the same law throughout the kingdom, that what is just or right in Champagne should not be deemed unjust or wrong in Normandy. Uniformity in every branch of administration is a virtue.⁵

Voltaire hails uniformity, regardless of the historical, constitutional circumstances that make Champagne different from Normandy. Robertson, on the other hand, champions diversity. He supports the right of Charles's separate dominions to their own national constitutional arrangements. With such views, it is logical that, as Pocock admits, 'the "reign of Charles V" is less of a panegyric than the "sicle de Louis XIV"'.⁶ This is too mild. The features for which Louis is praised by Voltaire are those for which Charles is condemned by Robertson.

The 'cosmopolitan' view is strengthened by the *Progress of Society* introduction. Felix Gilbert writes that 'The first impression which *A View of the Progress of Society in Europe* gives [...] is that it was written by a man who belonged to the school of the *philosophes*'.⁷ As there are similarities between the *Progress* and

⁵ Voltaire, *Louis XIV*, p. 335.

⁶ Pocock, *Barbarism*, II, p. 289.

⁷ Felix Gilbert, 'Editor's Introduction', in William Robertson, *The Progress of Society in Europe*, (Chicago and London, 1972), pp. xi-xxvii, (p. xiv).

philosophe writing, this is a valid statement. The *Progress* is concerned with general issues, like Books IV and VII of *America*, and it is in these sections that Robertson most inclines to ‘cosmopolitan’ or ‘school of Voltaire’ or perhaps ‘British’ values about progress, order and government. It is in *Charles V*, however, that we first encounter the dichotomy between Robertson’s general ‘conjectural’ writing and his narrative history. The *Progress* could be written specifically with ‘polite’ eighteenth-century readers in mind.⁸ It was certainly popular with ‘polite’ readers. The ‘cosmopolitan’ Hume thought that ‘were it not for the first Volume, the Success of the work [...] would not have been so shining’.⁹ Periodicals for ‘polite’ readers felt the same. The *Annual Register* called the *Progress* the section ‘which many of our readers will consider the most valuable part of the work’, and the *Monthly Review* described it as ‘by far the most valuable part’.¹⁰

It appears that, when writing general, ‘conjectural’ history, Robertson maintains the values associated with it and the ‘polite’ century which created it. In the narrative portion of the work, dealing with specific persons and events, we shall see that Robertson’s attitudes change, and he appears to return to older ‘Scottish’ values which sometimes contradict those found in the *Progress*.

Robertson’s view of Charles himself is also significant. To Robertson, his main characteristic is a ‘rapacious ambition labouring to avail itself of every favourable circumstance’ (C I: 536). Charles’s increasing despotic ambition is a theme that runs constantly through the work, making it almost an extended sermon on despotic pride and ambition. As Pocock says, Charles suffers from ‘hubris of state’.¹¹ That this hubris results in war on German constitutional liberties and religion adds a ‘Scottish’ political

⁸ See above, pp. 30–31.

⁹ Hume to Hugh Blair, 28/3/1769, in *Letters*, I, p. 197.

¹⁰ Review of *Charles V*, *Annual Register*, 12 (1769), 254–272, (p. 255); [Ruffhead], p. 321.

¹¹ Pocock, *Barbarism*, II, p. 295.

dimension to Robertson's moral criticism of Charles's corruption by despotic power. Robertson's Charles is a living object lesson, and as such, he is strangely one-dimensional. O'Brien notices Robertson's 'presentation of Charles as Ambition personified', but makes no comment on the implications of this (*NE*: 143). Having described Robertson as believing in 'the twin growth of civil liberty and monarchy' (*NE*: 138), as though Robertson found these complementary rather than antagonistic, she cannot emphasize his 'Scottish' anti-despotic outlook.

The nearest thing to a statement of Robertson's concerns in *Charles V* occurs in a letter to Walpole. As important, Robertson lists:

The struggle of the Spanish cortes for their liberty; the Reformation in Germany; the wars in Italy; the revival of letters; the conquest of the New World; the rise of the piratical states in Barbary, and the Emperor's expedition against them; his wars with the Turks; the rivalry between Francis and Charles.¹²

As Robertson gives precedence to Spain and Germany, these will be the main subjects of my consideration. This seems justified, as religion, Reformation and its associated German conflicts take up much of the work; and Charles's early behaviour in Spain serves as an introduction to his later actions in Germany. Robertson's interest in the revival of letters is confined to its contribution to the Reformation, and will be briefly considered in that context. The New World was reserved for a separate history. Throughout Robertson's description of Charles's reign runs the steady theme of Charles's corruption by despotic pride and ambition; his relations with Francis I are increasingly indicative of this, so they will also be touched upon where relevant.

¹² Robertson to Walpole, 20/2/1759, in *Walpole's Correspondence*, XV, p. 46.

1) Spain

Robertson's account of the Spanish revolts of the 1520's has received little attention. The 'cosmopolitan' view cannot encompass Robertson's approval of a revolt based on patriotic xenophobia, or a most un-Voltairean support for resistance to monarchy. Likewise, the 'British' view, holding that Robertson abandoned 'Scottish' Whig Presbyterian views regarding resistance cannot accommodate Robertson's handling of the Spanish revolts.

Charles's behaviour in Spain is foreshadowed, in Robertson's account, by his treatment of his minister Cardinal Ximenes. Robertson's admiration for this Catholic cleric is at first puzzling. A modern Catholic writer suggests that Robertson felt a kinship with Ximenes: 'two moderate statesmen called to one another across the gulfs of time, creed, climate and language'.¹³ It is unlikely, however, that the Presbyterian Robertson could have considered a Spanish prelate as 'moderate'. Indeed, he points out that Ximenes, the product of a monastery, was given to 'those excesses of superstitious veneration which are the proper characteristics of monastic life' (C I: 317). The reason for Robertson's uncharacteristic admiration is Ximenes's patriotism in dealing with his absentee monarch. Charles is surrounded by Flemish advisers, who 'aimed at directing the affairs of Spain', and are therefore 'jealous of the great abilities and independent spirit of Ximenes' (C I: 326). The Spaniards, however, support the autocratic Ximenes, from patriotic motives:

The Spaniards, more averse, perhaps, than any other people to the government of strangers [...] chose rather to see the supreme power in the hands of one of their countrymen, whom they feared, than in those of foreigners, whom they hated (C I: 327).

The dislike of foreign domination Robertson attributes to Spaniards is similar to that

¹³ Owen Dudley Edwards, 'Robertsonian Romanticism and Realism', in *Expansion of Empire*, pp. 92-121, (p. 113).

which he sees in Scots in the time of Mary of Guise. Indeed, Robertson's description the independent Spanish spirit seems to have appealed to Scots. The *Edinburgh Advertiser* chose, as a passage for reproduction, an extract from *Charles V* in which Charles is shown backing down before Spanish nobles whose rights he has infringed, from fear of offending 'a jealous and high-spirited order of men' (C II: 50-51).¹⁴ Charles ignores this spirit, giving his Flemings a free hand in Spain, and 'Spaniards were filled with rage when they beheld offices of great importance to the welfare of their country set to sale by strangers unconcerned for their honour or its happiness' (C I: 329). Ximenes is praised because he appeals against the Flemings: 'He represented to the king, in strong terms, the murmurs and indignation which their behaviour excited among a free and high spirited people' (C I: 329).

The only reward which Ximenes receives, when Charles finally comes to Spain, is his dismissal. This ingratitude kills Ximenes, who dies full of patriotic fears: 'his generous heart could not bear the prospect of misfortune ready to fall on his country' (C I: 334).

Charles's visit to his new kingdoms is a long record of offences. He is 'constantly surrounded by Flemings; no person got access to him without their permission; nor was any permitted to audience but in their presence' (C I: 336). Charles makes a Fleming Archbishop of Toledo, which the Castilians see 'not only as an injury but as an insult to the whole nation' (C I: 337).

Charles has a less easy time in Aragon where the cortes oblige him to swear 'that solemn oath which the Aragonese exacted of their kings, never to violate any of their rights and liberties' (C I: 338). Furthermore, when they grant him money, they deduct some of it for old royal debts. Robertson approves of this: 'What had happened

¹⁴ Extract from *Charles V, Edinburgh Advertiser*, no. 546 (21/3/1769-24/3/1769), 185.

in Castile taught them caution and determined them rather to satisfy the claims of their fellow citizens [...] than to furnish strangers the means of enriching themselves with the spoils of their country' (C I: 338). Robertson's approval of Aragonese behaviour here clashes with his treatment of the Aragonese constitution in the *Progress*, in which he describes the famous Aragonese oath exacted from Charles. This states the right of the Aragonese to withdraw obedience to any monarch who violates their privileges. Robertson's description of Aragonese attitudes in the *Progress* is somewhat disapproving: 'the attachment of the Aragonese to this singular constitution was extreme and their respect for it approached to superstitious veneration' (C I: 145). However, when Robertson describes the constitutional conditions imposed on Charles, he does not find the Aragonese attitude extreme, but admirably patriotic.

While Charles is in Aragon, three Castilian cities 'entered into a confederacy for the defence of their rights and privileges' (C I: 339). From this, Robertson, severely notes, the nobility holds aloof, displaying 'neither the public spirit nor the generous resolution which became their order' (C I: 339). This contradicts the view that sees Robertson welcoming strong monarchy as a check to noble power; Robertson criticizes the nobles for *not* exerting their power. Again, there is a clash with the *Progress*, where Robertson refers to the 'exorbitant privileges' and 'overgrown power and high pretensions of the nobility' in Spain, and praises King Ferdinand's plans to 'reduce these within more moderate bounds' (C I: 150-151). In the narrative, Robertson's position seems reversed. Ferdinand, who makes a brief appearance in the early narrative, is also criticized. Like his grandson Charles, he offends patriotism. When his wife Queen Isabella dies, he tries to hang on to Castile, which is not his by right, offending 'Castilian pride' which will not 'submit without murmuring to the government of a king of Aragon' (C I: 299).

Robertson's views on the 'public spirit' which the Spanish nobles should display are very much in the 'Scottish' tradition. Buchanan writes scornfully of those who 'are tempted to turn aside from danger by fear or regard for their own interest'. Only those concerned for national welfare are 'true citizens', those who 'forgetful of their own safety, prefer effort and danger [...] to being at ease but without honour'.¹⁵ In Buchanan's Scottish history, the 'true citizens' are the nobles, and Robertson's criticism of the Spanish nobles' aloofness from the cities' patriotic confederation is in the same spirit as Buchanan's description of those who are 'at ease but without honour'. Knox has a similar view to Buchanan's, but in the religious context of a call to Scottish nobles to protect the Scottish Protestants: 'God speaketh to your consciences [...] that you ought to hazard your own lives (be it against kings and emperors) for their deliverance'.¹⁶ The persistence of this sort of tradition is evident in the works of other eighteenth-century Scottish writers, like Adam Ferguson, who writes in the abstract about the 'public spirit' principles which Robertson applies to actual historical events:

If a growing indifference to objects of a public nature should prevail and [...] silence that noise of dissension which generally accompany the exercise of freedom, we may venture to prognosticate corruption in the national manners, as well as remissness in the national spirit.¹⁷

Ferguson, like Robertson, showed his concern for 'public spirit' in the 'Scottish' martial/patriotic context of the militia agitations.

Robertson's account of events in Spain takes a significant turn when Charles hears that he has been elected Emperor. This strengthens his despotic pretensions: 'he assumed the title of *majesty* and required it from his subjects' (C I: 352). Other

¹⁵ Buchanan, *Powers*, p. 134.

¹⁶ Knox, *Reformation*, I, p. 135.

¹⁷ Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, ed. by Duncan Forbes, (Edinburgh, 1966), p. 256.

monarchs follow him: 'the vanity of other courts soon led them to imitate the example of the Spanish' (C I: 352). In dismissing the new title as 'vanity', Robertson again resembles Buchanan, who condemns 'such terms as Your Majesty [...] and other expressions even more disgusting'.¹⁸ Robertson is strongly aware that Charles's new dignity is disastrous for Spain. The Spaniards see it as the reduction of their country to a secondary position in their cosmopolitan monarch's European plan, and Robertson describes their patriotic horror in sympathetic terms:

To be deprived of the presence of their sovereign and to be subjected to the government of a viceroy and his council, a species of administration often oppressive and always disagreeable [...] To see the blood of their countrymen shed in quarrels wherein the nation had no concern, to behold its treasures wasted in supporting the splendour of a foreign title [...] they concluded that nothing could have happened more pernicious to the Spanish nation (C I: 353).

Charles, however, 'without regarding the sentiments or murmurs of his Spanish subjects' accepts the Imperial dignity (C I: 353). He then justifies Spanish fears by demanding another subsidy from Castile, prompting the major cities to protest 'the demanding of another donative to be unprecedented, unconstitutional and unnecessary' (C I: 357). Once again to Robertson's disapproval, the nobles are deficient in 'public spirit'; they are 'soothed by the respectful assiduity' with which the 'Flemings paid court to them', and side with Charles (C I: 357). Charles gets his money and leaves for Germany. As Regent, he appoints a foreigner, Adrian of Utrecht, which appointment 'animated the Castilians with new hatred against foreigners' and finally galvanizes the nobility, who 'remonstrated against it as illegal' (C I: 358).

Revolt breaks out when Charles leaves, led by Juan de Padilla, 'a young nobleman of a generous temper, of undaunted courage' (C I: 447). Robertson's view of Padilla impressed a Scottish reviewer, William Guthrie, who praises Robertson for

¹⁸ Buchanan, *Powers*, p. 34.

‘doing justice to the memory of Padilla, the great Spanish patriot’.¹⁹ This is significant as Guthrie disliked Robertson, because his own history of Scotland failed to challenge Robertson’s success. As Bishop Douglas wrote to Robertson, ‘An unsuccessful historian is the worst hand the life of Charles V could be received by. I should not, therefore, be surprised if Mr Guthrie is sparing in his commendations’.²⁰ Guthrie’s review of *Charles V* is indeed largely hostile. However, it is possible that he shared with Robertson a ‘Scottish’ sympathy for the Padilla’s patriotism, which led him temporarily to overcome personal dislike and commend Robertson’s treatment of him.

Robertson’s sympathies are with the rebels. The revolt is not, he insists ‘the effect merely of [...] tumultuary rage’ (C I: 451). This distinguishes him from Hume, who dismisses the Spanish revolts as ‘the tumults which had arisen in his [i.e., Charles’s] absence’.²¹ Voltaire never considered Spanish affairs during Charles’s reign, but in *Louis XIV*, he sympathizes with Spanish monarchs because ‘they governed a people whose privileges allowed them to be disloyal’, which shows that his sympathies lie with monarchs.²² For Robertson, however, the rebellious cities ‘aimed at obtaining redress of their political grievances, and the establishment of public liberty [...] objects worthy of all the zeal which they discovered in contending for them’ (C I: 451). That Robertson sympathizes with the revolt is unsurprising, as, like the Scottish rebellion against Mary of Guise, it has a patriotic character. One of the first demands made by the ‘holy junta’ or confederation of cities is the removal of the foreign Regent, whose appointment ‘they declared with one voice to be a violation of the fundamental laws of the kingdom’ (C I: 452). Other demands, listed by Robertson in detail (C I: 456–458),

¹⁹ [William Guthrie], Review of *Charles V*, *Critical Review*, 27 (1769), 241–256, 321–323, 401–415, (p. 407).

²⁰ Bishop John Douglas to Robertson, 21/4/1769, *R-McD*, MS 3942, f. 91, NLS.

²¹ Hume, *History*, III, p. 143.

²² Voltaire, *Louis XIV*, p. 8.

also have a patriotic bias—the exclusion of foreigners from office, the forbidding of foreign troops in Spain, and demands that Charles live in Spain and not surround himself with Flemings (*C I*: 456–457). Demands are also made for removing royal influence from the cortes, fixing its powers and limiting the king's (*C I*: 456). Such demands, says Robertson, represent 'bold and generous sentiments concerning government' (*C I*: 459).

The Spaniards fail in their struggle. The junta begins 'to impose innovations which, by alarming the other members of the constitution, proved fatal to their cause' (*C I*: 459). They attack the nobility, eventually driving them into the arms of government. Even then, Robertson is anxious to show that the nobles, motivated by 'public spirit', try to save the cause:

The nobles discovered great unwillingness to proceed to extremes with the junta. They were animated with no less hatred than the commons against the Flemings [...] they were afraid that while the two orders of which the legislature was composed wasted each other's strength by mutual hostilities, the crown would rise on the ruin and weakness of them both (*C I*: 465).

Like Buchanan, Robertson here sees the nobles as the guardians of liberty and country. He blames the split in the rebel cause on the junta, who go 'beyond all bounds of prudence and of moderation' and are 'carried away by resentment against the nobility' (*C I*: 460, 466). They propose to strip the nobility of the crown lands they have engrossed, restoring them to the crown. This Robertson calls 'a preposterous scheme, which would at once have annihilated all the liberties for which they had been struggling, by rendering the kings of Castile absolute and independent of their subjects' (*C I*: 466). There can be few clearer indications that Robertson did *not* favour the establishment of powerful monarchy in the sixteenth century. In his view, the junta's action is a betrayal of patriotic and anti-despotic 'public spirit':

They now exclaimed with less vehemence against the exactions of foreign ministers than against the exorbitant wealth and power of the

nobles, and seemed to hope that they might make peace with Charles by offering to enrich him with their spoils (*C I*: 466)

Charles, however, is not interested. The nobility, now on his side, defeat the junta, and 'this bold attempt of the commons, like all unsuccessful insurrections, contributed to confirm and extend the power of the crown which it was intended to moderate and abridge' (*C I*: 467-469, 472). For the cities, the result is tragic: 'The privileges which the cities had enjoyed were gradually circumscribed and abolished [...] they lost that power and influence which they had acquired in the cortes' (*C I*: 473). Robertson's discussion of the revolt's failure is not, however, designed to stress the folly of rebellion. Robertson does not find Spanish resistance in any way foolish. What he criticizes is division within the forces of resistance, because the resistance is thereby weakened.

Spain's fate after the revolt is 'cosmopolitanization'. A modern historian describes Charles's victory over the rebels as 'the momentary triumph of Europe over Castile'.²³ This is exactly how Robertson sees it. Spain becomes merely a cog in its European monarch's system. In a later portion of the work, Robertson briefly describes the dismal condition of Spain under its cosmopolitan ruler—a mere source of money and soldiers for Charles's foreign wars. The Castilian nobles protest against this:

They had often complained that their country was drained not only of its wealth but of its inhabitants in order to prosecute quarrels in which it was not interested, and to fight battles from which it could reap no benefit (*C II*: 48).

Remonstrations, however, are futile. Charles's response is to exclude the nobility from the cortes, 'on pretense that such as pay no part of the public tax should not claim any vote in laying it on' (*C II*: 49). 'Pretense' suggests that Robertson does not find the reason constitutionally valid. That nobles do not pay taxes has not, hitherto, excluded

²³ J.H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain 1469-1716*, (London, 1970), p. 160.

them from the cortes. Charles is exercising the ability of the despot to make up laws as he goes along. The result is a cortes composed entirely of city representatives, whose power has been smashed in the early revolts, and who are now 'wholly at the devotion of the court' (C II: 49). Robertson now returns to the theme of division. As Moore notices in her brief discussion of Robertson's treatment of Spain in *Charles V*, Robertson stresses that the nobility were mistaken in eventually siding with the monarch during the revolts.²⁴

The improvident zeal with which the Castilian nobles had supported the royal prerogative [...] in the year 1521 proved at last fatal to their own body. By enabling Charles to depress one of the orders, they [...] put it in his power or in that of his successors, to humble the other (C II: 49).

At the end of the work, where Robertson describes the state of Europe at the death of Charles, the last stage of decline is recounted. The nobles are made powerless by 'royal authority, which, leaving them the vain distinction of being covered in the presence of their sovereign, stripped them [...] of that real power which they had possessed while they formed one body and acted in concert with the people' (C II: 501).

The image of the nobles exercising their privilege of keeping their hats on while simultaneously being stripped of their power emphasizes powerfully the contrast between the liberty of the old-fashioned nobleman and the triviality of the courtier.

2) Luther, the Reformation and Religion

That Robertson's perception of the Reformation is Providential is acknowledged even by the 'cosmopolitan' school, although this is a major difference between Robertson and the historians with whom they align him. Black sees Robertson invoking 'a providential preparation of circumstances' for the Reformation (AH: 140), and O'Brien calls his handling of it 'firmly, if unobtrusively, providential' (NE: 144). Robertson

²⁴ Moore, p. 335.

explains the connection between Providence and history in his 1755 sermon. Its theme—the time of Christ’s appearance—is introduced in a way that clearly reveals Robertson’s belief in this connection: ‘Many circumstances concurred in procuring for Christianity such a favourable reception [...] Whoever reflects upon the situation of mankind in that period, will find abundant reason to admire the divine wisdom which disposed these circumstances’ (XA: xciii). Robertson also criticizes views which see the late appearance of Christ as an argument against Christianity: ‘The appearance of Christ in so late an age was an objection raised by his ancient adversaries against the truth of his mission; and modern infidels have not failed to revive and urge it, with their usual confidence and triumph’ (XA: xcv-xcvi). Whether this is directed against any particular infidels is irrelevant. The point is that a clear difference is indicated between Robertson’s views and the general scepticism that characterized Hume, Voltaire and Gibbon.

Robertson is equally clear about the role of Providence in the Reformation:

Though none of the Reformers possessed [...] supernatural gifts; yet that wonderful preparation of circumstances which disposed the minds of men for receiving their doctrines [...] which secured their success, and enabled men destitute of power and of policy to triumph over those who employed against them extraordinary efforts of both, may be considered as no slight proof that the same hand which planted the Christian religion protected the Reformed faith (C I: 371).

This openly states that the Reformation and Protestantism are expressions of Divine will. Such Providential perceptions are, as Allan points out, a legacy of the Knoxian tradition of historiography, the persistence of which ‘suggests the unremitting influence of basic Calvinist assumptions upon the later course of Scottish scholarship’ (VL: 51). There is good reason for seeing this persistence in Robertson’s case. As I have discussed, and as Allan shows, his view of Knox himself is Providential

(VL: 209).²⁵ Furthermore, his assertion that Providence motivated the Reformation is definitely at odds with the view held by Hume and Voltaire. These historians see the Reformation in purely secular terms, as the result of a squabble arising from a Papal need for money which causes disagreement between two orders of Friars about who should sell indulgences.²⁶

Despite acknowledgements of Robertson's Providential view, his treatment of the Reformation has been secularized by a belief that Robertson saw it as part of a general progress towards enlightenment, aligned with the revival of learning and influenced by the spirit of Erasmus. O'Brien calls Robertson's view a 'celebration of the Reformation as a broad process of intellectual transformation in Europe' and compares it to Gibbon's (NE: 191). Gibbon does indeed see the Reformation as part of a general process of growing intellectual freedom, and what is important to him is that 'since the days of Luther and Calvin, a secret reformation has been silently working in the bosom of the reformed churches; many weeds of prejudice were eradicated; and the disciples of Erasmus diffused a spirit of freedom and moderation'.²⁷ Robertson's view differs significantly, particularly about Erasmus. Phillipson suggests that Robertson's whole religious outlook resembles Erasmus's,²⁸ but Robertson's history does not suggest any fellow feeling with the humanist. He briefly discusses the contribution made to the Reformation by the revival of learning, including Erasmus's input (C I: 408-411) and grants that Erasmus was Luther's 'forerunner and auxiliary in his war upon the church' (C I: 412). However, as Fearnley-Sander points out, Robertson 'differentiates the attacks of man like Erasmus from those of Luther by the greater

²⁵ See above, pp. 120-121.

²⁶ Hume, *History*, III, pp. 134-142; Voltaire, *Essay*, II, pp. 290-299.

²⁷ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, III, p. 438.

²⁸ Phillipson, 'Providence', p. 73.

impetuosity and violence of the latter'.²⁹ What she does not mention is that Robertson *prefers* Luther's approach. Erasmus soon loses courage and begins 'to censure Luther as too daring and impetuous' (C I: 412). Robertson's view of Erasmus's attitude is definitely contemptuous:

The natural timidity of his temper, his want of that strength of mind which alone can prompt a man to assume to character of a reformer, his excessive deference for persons in high stations, his dread of losing the pensions [...] which their liberality had conferred upon him, his extreme love of peace, his hopes of reforming abuses gradually and by gentle methods, all concurred in determining him [...] to repress and moderate the zeal with which he had once been animated against the errors of the Church (C I: 411-412).

Guthrie, in the *Critical Review*, states that 'we cannot think he does full justice to the incomparable Erasmus'.³⁰ As Robertson calls Erasmus cowardly, mercenary and servile, this is unsurprising. Erasmus shows that subservience to 'great men' which Robertson refused to show in church matters. This apart, however, it is significant that Robertson's political position was based on a platform of moderation that, ostensibly, is far closer to Erasmus's position than Luther's. Yet Erasmian moderation, admired by Gibbon, attracts contempt from Robertson. A love of peace is praiseworthy, but Robertson sees Erasmus's as 'extreme' and inappropriate in a battle against Popish 'errors'. This again suggests a contradiction between Robertson's public position and his views when he was less on parade, and strengthens the view that his 'Moderate' stance was more a political strategy than the result of conviction.

Apart from briefly noticing the contribution which the revival of learning made to the Reformation, Robertson shows no interest in the Renaissance, although this is the first thing one might look for in a 'cosmopolitan' Voltairean historian. Describing the reception of *Charles V* in England, Bishop Douglas states that 'some expected

²⁹ Fearnley-Sander, *Emancipation*, p. 137.

³⁰ [Guthrie], p. 403.

to find a more particular account of the revival of letters [...] But I tell them that if they expect what it was never your intention to provide, they are unreasonable'.³¹ What people expected, of course, was something like Voltaire's *Louis XIV*, which devotes whole chapters to literature and the arts, or Hume's history, which includes lengthy discussions of learning in different periods.³² Instead, most of *Charles V* is straightforward political history.

As with Knox, Robertson has been given a fastidious attitude to Luther. In fact Robertson's view of Luther is admiring, although it includes Tacitean modifications and gestures towards 'polite' sentiment. The first characteristics attributed to Luther by Robertson are 'uncommon vigour and acuteness of genius' (C I: 374). Like Knox, Luther is fearless regarding authority. Ordered to recant his views by Cardinal Cajetan, he refuses to obey: 'He declared with the utmost firmness that he could not [...] renounce opinions which he believed to be true; nor should any consideration ever induce him to do what would be so base in itself and so offensive to God' (C I: 382). Robertson's Luther never flinches: 'Though sensible of the danger, he discovered no symptoms of timidity or remissness, but continued to vindicate his own conduct and opinions, and to inveigh against those of his adversaries' (C I: 384). A very different view is presented in Hume's description of Luther at the same period, which sees him as carried away by a lust for power:

Luther, a man naturally inflexible, vehement, opinionative, was become incapable, either of promises of advancement or terrors of severity, to relinquish a sect of which he was the founder, and which brought him a glory superior to all others, the glory of dictating the religious faith and principles of multitudes.³³

³¹ John Douglas to Robertson, 21/4/1769, *R-McD*, MS 3942, f. 91, NLS.

³² Voltaire, *Louis XIV*, pp. 357-375; Hume, *History*, IV, 385-386; V, 149-155; VI, 542-545.

³³ Hume, *History*, III, p. 139.

This is the ‘ambitious monk’ view which Phillipson mistakenly attributes to Robertson.³⁴ Robertson’s view of Luther is, in fact, that he is a courageous warrior for truth. It is Hume who sees him as an ambitious, insubordinate nuisance, a view only marginally better than Voltaire’s, which sees him as a public relations officer for the Augustinian Friars in a business dispute about the indulgence franchise.³⁵

In Robertson’s account, Luther continues his advance in the cause of truth, until he begins to question Papal power: ‘observing the corruption of the court of Rome, its obstinacy in adhering to established errors and its indifference about truth [...] he began to utter some doubts with regard to the divine original of the papal authority’ (C I: 386). This leads him into ever-hotter water, but ‘the undaunted spirit of Luther acquired additional fortitude from every instance of opposition’ (C I: 387). When Pope Leo finally excommunicates him, this ‘did not disconcert or intimidate Luther’ (C I: 388). Eventually, Luther confronts Charles V at the Diet of Worms, and, with ‘great decency and equal firmness’, refuses the command to recant (C I: 415).

Robertson makes a gesture to ‘polite’ prejudice in describing the ‘gross scurrility’ and ‘low buffoonery’ used by Luther in controversy. He immediately softens the criticism, however, by adding that ‘No dispute was managed in those rude times without a large portion of the former, and the latter was common’ (C I: 407). Robertson further justifies Luther’s attitude by stating that it was well received by an audience ‘who had themselves endured the rigour of papal tyranny and seen the corruptions of the Church, against which he inveighed’ (C I: 405). Robertson sees plainly that ‘invective and ridicule had some effect [...] in exposing the errors of popery’ (C I: 407). Robertson’s mild criticism of Luther’s roughness, which he then states is justifiable, cannot be compared to the ‘polite’ view of Voltaire, for whom ‘It is

³⁴ See above, p. 12.

³⁵ Voltaire, *Essay*, II, p. 291.

impossible to read, without indignation, the manner in which Luther treats all his adversaries, but especially the pope', and who, unlike Robertson, laments the fact that Luther's coarseness 'triumphed in his own country over the Roman politeness'.³⁶ For Robertson what matters is that Popery is fought; for Voltaire, the significant question is one of 'politeness'.

Like Knox, Luther revives demoralized Protestantism. This is shown in Robertson's treatment of the attempted religious reconciliation at the Diet of Augsburg of 1530. At this Diet, Luther's disciple, the humanist Melancthon draws up the Confession of Augsburg, 'expressed in terms as little offensive to the Roman Catholics as a regard for truth could permit' (C I: 613). Despite Melancthon's conciliatory approach, no agreement can be reached. Charles V decides to resolve the matter by decree, and issues the Recess of Augsburg 'condemning most of the peculiar tenets held by the Protestants' and 'forbidding any person to protect or tolerate such as taught them' (C I: 614). This sends Melancthon into a decline: 'The dread of those calamities which were ready to fall on the Church oppressed the feeble spirit of Melancthon, and, as if the cause had already been desperate, he gave himself up to melancholy and lamentation' (C I: 614). As with Erasmus, Robertson is contemptuous of the behaviour of a moderate humanist. Very different is the conduct of Luther, who now steps in: 'Luther [...] was not disconcerted by the prospect of this new danger. He comforted Melancthon and his desponding disciples, and exhorted the princes not to abandon those truths which they had lately asserted with such laudable boldness' (C I: 614-615). The Protestants rally and the princes soon form the League of Smalkalde (C I: 615). This, in later years, will be Charles's chief German enemy and the protector of Protestantism and German liberties.

³⁶ Voltaire, *Essay*, II, p. 295.

When Robertson sums up Luther's character (C II: 154-158), he again uses Tacitean tactics. The description of Luther begins with one and a half pages of panegyric (C II: 154-155). Luther is commended for 'undaunted intrepidity' and 'unwearied industry'; he possesses 'purity and even austerity of manners' which 'became one who assumed the character of a reformer', and he is 'superior to all selfish considerations'; even his faults 'cannot be attributed to malevolence and corruption of heart, but seem to have taken their rise from the same source with many of his virtues' (C II: 155). This is followed by a cursory half page listing Luther's bad points, including rashness, obstinacy, 'rage and scurrility' (C II: 156). Even here, Robertson shows that such faults were the result of Luther's integrity: 'Accustomed himself to consider everything as subordinate to truth, he expected the same deference from it from other men' so that 'he poured forth against such as disappointed him in this particular a torrent of invective' (C II: 156). The rest of the passage explains that these are not really faults at all. There is a somewhat apologetic statement that Luther's roughness 'ought to be charged in part to the manners of the age' (C II: 156), but this is soon followed by a vindication: 'A spirit more amiable but less vigorous than Luther's would have shrunk back from the dangers which he braved and surmounted' (C II: 157). This is very similar to Robertson's description of Knox.³⁷

Considering *Charles V* as a whole, Robertson's depiction of Luther is admiring, confirming Robertson's view that Luther is 'raised up by Providence to be the author of the one of the greatest [...] revolutions recorded in history' (C II: 154). Despite Robertson's veneration for Luther, only A.G. Dickens and John Tonkin see his description as 'an overwhelmingly positive portrait'.³⁸ For Black, Robertson's view of Luther is 'by no means flattering' (AH: 122). To O'Brien, Robertson sees Luther only

³⁷ See above, p. 120.

³⁸ A.G. Dickens and John Tonkin, *The Reformation in Historical Thought*, (London, 1985), p. 144.

as ‘the somewhat blunt instrument of a “peculiar providence”’ (NE: 144). Sher sees Robertson’s attitude as apologetic: ‘Robertson recognised that the Protestant reformers had given as good as they got, but [...] apologised for Luther by attributing his intolerance and arrogance to “the manners of the age”’.³⁹ Such views fit with the positions of their presenters—Black and O’Brien’s ‘cosmopolitan’ position, and Sher’s view that Robertson’s ‘Moderatism’ was a sincere conviction both require that Robertson not be too enthusiastic about a Protestant enthusiast. Such views, however, ignore the admiration which Robertson expresses for Luther, sustaining themselves with the few ‘polite’ criticisms Robertson makes of Luther’s roughness, and are therefore misleading.

Robertson’s view of Catholicism in *Charles V* is severe, but his views have nonetheless been desectarianized in line with the project of making him a tolerant ‘cosmopolitan’ figure. O’Brien gives him an ecumenical approach, in which Knox and Luther are ‘revealed as instruments of an instinctive movement among both the Protestant and Catholic peoples of Europe to set in place adequately representative social structures’.⁴⁰ This completely strips Robertson’s view of its sectarian element. Edwards also softens Robertson’s sectarianism, saying that ‘when doctrine had been served, Robertson was ready enough to show the beneficial social consequences of Catholicism, notably in the Truce of God restraining private warfare’.⁴¹ Robertson does indeed do this, but in the *Progress* introduction, which, as I have tried to show, is uncharacteristic of his work as a whole (C I: 45). He also adds, in a note, that the Truce never worked: ‘the nobles, disregarding the truce, prosecuted their quarrels without interruption, as formerly’, which rather detracts from his praise of the Truce (C I: 228).

³⁹ Sher, ‘Book Trade’, p. 183.

⁴⁰ Karen O’Brien, ‘Robertson’s Place’, p. 76.

⁴¹ Edwards, p. 119.

This qualified recognition of Catholicism's 'beneficial social consequences' is trivial compared to the denunciations of Popery which run through the narrative of *Charles V*. The work shows little of that 'calm breeze of toleration' which Birley feels blowing through it.⁴²

Robertson's first treatment of Catholicism in the narrative of *Charles V* is a condemnatory digression on the pre-Reformation Church (C I: 393-406). The criticisms are similar to those in *Scotland*; the Church is distinguished by 'dissolute manners, exorbitant wealth' and 'enormous powers and privileges' (C I: 406). The description also shows Robertson's patriotic sympathies: 'the burden, however, of ecclesiastical oppression had fallen with [...] peculiar weight on the Germans' which is what makes them 'more inclinable than any people in Europe to listen to those who called on them to assert their liberty'; this is why the Reformation begins in Germany (C I: 398). It is in Germany that the Popes have the 'most absolute authority' (C I: 403). Germany is 'filled with persons who were servilely dependent on the court of Rome' (C I: 405). As in *Scotland*, Robertson connects Catholicism with foreign control.

In describing the corruptions of the Church in Germany, Robertson again claims impartiality, being careful not to be accused of relying on Protestant sources:

Nor has this sketch been copied from the controversial writers of that age, who [...] may be suspected of [...] misrepresenting the conduct of the Church they laboured to overturn: it is formed upon more authentic evidence—upon the memorials and remonstrances of the Imperial diets, enumerating the grievances under which the Empire groaned (C I: 406).

However, the effect of this assertion is the opposite of its ostensible intention.

Catholicism is left looking even worse because Robertson does not *need* to use biased sources to paint a dire picture. Despite such assertions of impartiality, one reviewer

⁴² Birley, p. 115.

still found Robertson's account biased: 'had the Historian been wholly divested of his clerical character, he would probably have treated this part of the work in a more free and enlarged manner'.⁴³

Robertson does not discuss Catholic doctrine. In fact, as Fearnley-Sander notices, he does not even discuss Protestant doctrine.⁴⁴ This absence of doctrinal discussion has also been noticed by Black (*AH*: 140), Birley and Dickens and Tonkin,⁴⁵ and O'Brien correctly says that Robertson's denunciation of the pre-Reformation Church is expressed 'in mainly ecclesiastical and political terms' (*NE*: 144). This is plainly an important question, and Robertson's avoidance of doctrinal discussion has many explanations. It is probably partly due to Robertson's belief, expressed in his 1755 sermon, that 'sacred' and 'civil' history should be considered separate fields (*XA*: xciii-xciv). As a 'civil' historian, Robertson may have felt that doctrine was the concern of 'sacred' history. Robertson's avoidance of doctrine was certainly not the result of a Voltairean contempt for 'unintelligible nonsense about justification and free will'.⁴⁶ His stand over the Westminster Confession suggests that he found doctrine—Protestant doctrine at any rate—far from despicable. Dickens and Tonkin make a valid point about Robertson's readership, that *Charles V* was written 'for a nonsectarian public'.⁴⁷ This is a fair description of the 'polite' readers Robertson needed. He was also worried about European Catholic readers, who might not have relished Catholic doctrine described by a Protestant minister.⁴⁸ With these possible explanations for Robertson's avoidance of doctrinal issues, there is no justification for Friedrich Meinecke's view that Robertson saw the Reformation 'in purely rationalist

⁴³ [Ruffhead], 'Review of *Charles V*', p. 82.

⁴⁴ Fearnley-Sander, *Emancipation*, p. 111.

⁴⁵ Birley, p. 121; Dickens and Tonkin, p. 145.

⁴⁶ Voltaire, *Essay*, II, p. 293.

⁴⁷ Dickens and Tonkin, p. 145.

⁴⁸ See above, pp. 105, 106-107.

terms, as a breakthrough to freer and more rational thinking about the deity'.⁴⁹ As Dickens and Tonkin say, Robertson's attitude to doctrine cannot be explained by 'positing a profound rationalist bias' because 'Robertson makes it plain that the emancipation of mankind was [...] directly connected with the Reformation's fundamental religious concerns'.⁵⁰ Even this view, however, still sees Robertson in something of a 'cosmopolitan', ecumenical light. Robertson's chief concern in *Charles V* is not a general 'emancipation of mankind' but the emancipation, in the sixteenth century, of Protestantism.

Even without discussion, Robertson's position on Catholic doctrine is clear. He makes it so when explaining that he does not discuss doctrine:

I avoided entering into any discussion of the theological doctrines of popery, and have not attempted to show how repugnant they are to the spirit of Christianity, and how destitute of any foundation [...] in the word of God, or in the practise of the primitive Church; leaving those topics to the ecclesiastical historians (*C I*: 412)

Pocock quotes this passage as evidence of Robertson's demarcation between 'civil' and 'sacred' history, which it illustrates clearly.⁵¹ What he does not notice is the anti-Catholic venom of the passage. Robertson needs no further discussion to make his opinions on Catholic doctrine clear. However, when discussing Luther's theological investigations, he again criticizes it:

The doctrines of popery are so closely connected that the exposing of one error conducted him naturally to the detection of others, and all the parts of that artificial fabric were so united together that the pulling down of one loosened all the rest and rendered it more easy to overturn them (*C I*: 392).

For Robertson, careful study of Popery can only reveal its doctrinal flimsiness.

Robertson's criticisms of the pre-Reformation Church resemble, in their

⁴⁹ Friedrich Meinecke, *Historism*, trans. by J.E. Anderson, (London, 1972), p. 194.

⁵⁰ Dickens and Tonkin, pp. 145-146.

⁵¹ Pocock, *Barbarism*, II, p. 294.

absence of doctrinal discussion, Hume's when he deals with the same period. However, Robertson is more vehement than Hume. Hume calls the Church 'an expensive and burthensome establishment'.⁵² Robertson speaks of 'the avarice and extortion of the court of Rome' (C I: 405). Hume also finds good points in Catholicism's grandeur: 'the pomp and splendor of worship which belonged to so opulent an establishment [...] began to diffuse a general elegance of taste by uniting it with religion'.⁵³ This concern is also reflected in Voltaire, who writes that 'the magnificence and voluptuousness of the court of Leo X must have shocked the public, but at the same time it was visible, that the court was polishing Europe and improving every social virtue'; and justifies the sale of indulgences to pay for St Peter's in Rome: 'All Christendom ought to have contributed to the erecting of this wonder of the metropolis in Europe'.⁵⁴ The idea that the splendour of the Church is justified by its 'polishing' effect is wholly absent from Robertson's account, and his view of the St Peter's project is austere: 'Julius II had bestowed indulgences on all who contributed towards the building of the church of St Peter at Rome, and as he [i.e., Leo X] was carrying on that magnificent and expensive fabric, his grant was founded on that same pretence' (C I: 372). A Presbyterian disdain for worship requiring grandiose external structures is detectable here. Robertson certainly does not agree that St Peter's justified the sale of indulgences, which, he states, 'came at last to give general offense' in Germany by its constant diversion of German money to Rome: 'The princes and nobles were irritated at seeing their vassals drained of so much wealth in order to replenish the treasury of a profuse pontiff' (C I: 373).

⁵² Hume, *History*, III, pp. 136-137, 137.

⁵³ Hume, *History*, III, p. 137.

⁵⁴ Voltaire, *Essay*, II, pp 189, 190.

Robertson's negative view of Catholicism also shows in his selective invocation of Providence. Pocock notices this in Robertson's treatment of the Council of Trent.⁵⁵ Robertson clearly sees the Reformation as the will of God, but he does not extend Providential sanction to the Counter-Reformation, in which the Council of Trent is the first step. Robertson states that anyone reading about this Council 'will find it no easy matter to believe, that any extraordinary influence of the Holy Ghost hovered over this assembly' (*C II*: 327). The same attitude is present in Robertson's view of that other instrument of the Counter-Reformation, the Society of Jesus. Luther is, in Robertson's view, 'raised up by Providence' to begin the Reformation. Ignatius of Loyola, 'a fanatic distinguished by extravagances in sentiment and conduct [...] repugnant to the spirit of true religion' is 'prompted by this fanatical spirit, or incited by the love of power and distinction' to found the Society (*C II*: 63). The Reformation is the work of God; the Jesuit Order the result of human fanaticism and vanity. In fact, Robertson's anti-Catholicism emerges at full steam when he deals with the Jesuits (*C II* 63-78). Authorities are reluctant to acknowledge this. O'Brien seems confused, and describes Robertson appraising the Jesuits 'with clinical detachment, in the sectarian vocabulary of superstition and corruption' (*NE*: 145). It is difficult to see how anyone can be both detached and sectarian, and, in fact, Robertson's attitude is unconditionally condemnatory. The Jesuits, he states

may justly be considered as responsible for most of the pernicious effects arising from that corrupt and dangerous casuistry, from those extravagant tenets concerning ecclesiastical power, and from that intolerant spirit, which have been the disgrace of the Church of Rome [...] and which have brought so many calamities upon civil society (*C II*: 72-73).

⁵⁵ Pocock, *Barbarism*, II, p. 292.

Admittedly, dislike for Jesuits can be 'cosmopolitan' as well as sectarian. As Renwick says, French *philosophes* could have construed Robertson's attack along these lines.⁵⁶ Hume criticizes the Jesuits, but also grants that they were often sinned against as well as sinners: 'the blame, to which their principles and conduct might be exposed, has, in many instances, been much exaggerated'. Hume's main concern is that Jesuits 'were engaged to pervert learning'.⁵⁷ Robertson, however, is more concerned about the Jesuits' war on Protestants:

They have made use of every art and have employed every weapon against them. They have set themselves in opposition to every gentle or tolerating measure in their favour. They have incessantly stirred up against them all the rage of ecclesiastical and civil persecution (C II: 72).

In spite of such denunciations, Robertson's views have been toned down. Black sees Robertson finding 'an appreciative word for the Jesuit order' (AH: 122), and Birley believes that, while Robertson's account 'reflects the hostility to the order felt in any Protestant country', it 'contains also an appreciation of the benefits resulting from it'.⁵⁸ These views suggest a superficial reading of Robertson. He does admittedly see that Jesuit administration in Paraguay is well organized and humane regarding the Amerindians (C II: 73, 74-75). But, says Robertson,

even in this meritorious effort [...] the genius and spirit of their order have mingled and are discernible. They plainly aimed at establishing in Paraguay an independent empire, subject to the Society alone [...] which by the superior excellence of its constitution and police could scarcely have failed to extend its dominions over all the southern continent of America' (C II: 75).

Jesuit benevolence is only part of a relentless pursuit of power.

It is suggested by O'Brien, that Robertson's final view of the consequences of the Reformation in *Charles V* is a non-sectarian one of a general 'enlightening'

⁵⁶ Renwick, p. 159.

⁵⁷ Hume, *History*, IV, p. 188.

⁵⁸ Birley, p. 116.

process, the eventual result of which is 'a modern pluralist system of interplay and constructive emulation between the denominations' (NE: 145). Robertson's final account of the post-Reformation religious situation is, in fact, far less tolerantly 'cosmopolitan' than O'Brien thinks. His view of the reduced power of the Popes is almost gloating: 'they have sunk almost to a level with the petty princes of Italy; they continue to claim, though they dare not exercise, the same spiritual jurisdiction, but hardly retain any shadow of temporal power' (C II: 515). Modern Popes are an improvement on the old variety, but Robertson's statement that they 'have made some atonement to mankind for the crimes of their predecessors' is again critical of the Catholic record (C II: 517). Any improvement in Catholicism since the Reformation is the result of Protestantism: 'the Reformation [...] has contributed to improve the Church of Rome both in science and in morals', and this is only because that Church was forced to change its image in order to compete with Protestantism (C II: 515). In Spain and Portugal, where 'the tyrannical jurisdiction of the Inquisition crushed the Protestant faith [...] the spirit of Popery continues invariable' (C II: 516). O'Brien's suggestion of 'interplay and constructive emulation' is misleading, because it implies a mutual process. In fact, while Robertson sees that Catholicism can learn improvement from Protestantism, there is no suggestion that the reverse is possible. Robertson's view of Catholicism remains essentially Protestant and contemptuous.

3) Germany

In *Charles V*, conflict between Protestantism and Catholicism takes place in Germany, and, for Robertson, it is also a fight between patriotic liberty and cosmopolitan despotism. Robertson's approval of the resistance made by the German Protestant princes to Charles is again relevant to the question of his attitude to 'Presbyterian

political theory'. This does not, at first, seem to be the case; German princes are Lutherans, not Calvinist Presbyterians, and Luther himself did not, at first, promote resistance. Luther was influenced by Pauline and Augustinian theology.⁵⁹ Paul insists that 'the powers that be are ordained of God' so that 'Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God'.⁶⁰ Augustine states that, even to a ruler like Nero, 'power of domination is not given except by the providence of God, when he decides that man's condition deserves such masters'.⁶¹ Advocates of resistance like Knox and Buchanan had to find ways around these problems. They received little help from their spiritual mentor, Calvin, who also took his stand on Paul's injunctions. However, Calvin does provide some guidance in that he preferred aristocratic to monarchical government, pointing out that 'the Lord [...] instituted an aristocracy bordering on a polity among the Israelites' in the time of the Judges, which pre-dates the Israelite monarchy. Calvin also acknowledged the possibility of 'popular magistrates, established to restrain the licentiousness of kings', such as Spartan Ephors. Calvin states that, if such magistrates exist, 'it is no part of my intention to prohibit them from [...] resisting the licentiousness and frenzy of kings'.⁶² Knox adopted a similar view when he suggested that the Scottish nobility had a duty to resist ungodly monarchs. In his *Appellation* to the Scottish nobility of 1558, he states that they were also to be considered as Paul's 'powers that be': 'If you be powers ordained by God (and that I hope all men will grant), then by the plain words of the Apostle is the sword given unto you by God for maintenance of the innocent and or punishment of malefactors'. Like

⁵⁹ James Atkinson, *Martin Luther and the Birth of Protestantism*, (London, 1968), pp. 36-36, 161.

⁶⁰ Romans, 13, i-ii.

⁶¹ Augustine, *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*, ed. by David Knowles, trans. by Henry Bettenson, (London, 1972), p. 213.

⁶² John Calvin, 'On Civil Government (*Institutio Christianae Religionis*, Book IV, chapter 20)', in Martin Luther and John Calvin, *Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority*, ed. and trans. by Harro Hopfl, (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 47-86 (pp. 52, 57, 82, 83).

Calvin, Knox also suggests the existence of lesser magistrates, in which class he places the Scottish nobility. Having established this, Knox makes it plain that monarchs can be 'malefactors': 'if your king be a man ignorant of God, enemy to His true religion [...] and a persecutor of Christ's members, shall ye be excused if with silence ye pass over his iniquity'? Certainly not, is Knox's answer: 'God will neither excuse nobility nor people, but the nobility least of all, that obey and follow their kings in manifest iniquity'.⁶³ This bears a close resemblance to Calvin's statement that if popular magistrates 'connive at their (i.e., monarchs') unbridled violence and insults [...] they are betraying the people and defrauding them of that liberty which they know they were ordained by God to defend'.⁶⁴ With such views, it was easy for Knox to develop the belief that the nobility were ordained to be 'bridles' to ungodly monarchical power.⁶⁵ Buchanan, citing John Chrysostom's statement that 'Paul was not writing of tyrants, but of true and lawfully appointed rulers' simply states that Paul only referred to 'good' rulers. He concedes that 'it is our duty to pray for bad princes' but 'we ought not to conclude from this that their crimes ought not to be punished [...] Nor does it follow from the fact that good rulers ought to be obeyed that the bad ones ought not to be resisted'.⁶⁶ Luther, however straightforwardly accepted Paul's doctrine. Writing in 1523, he does not permit active resistance even to religious thinkers persecuted by Catholic princes: 'If their homes are ordered searched and books or property taken by force, they should suffer it to be done [...] Outrage is not to be resisted, but endured'. This was because, like Augustine, Luther believes that princes are 'God's executioners and hangmen; his divine wrath uses them to punish the wicked'.⁶⁷ As Cargill-

⁶³ Knox, 'Apellation', pp. 85, 95, 97.

⁶⁴ Calvin, p. 83.

⁶⁵ See above, p. 134.

⁶⁶ Buchanan, 'Powers', p. 113.

⁶⁷ Martin Luther, 'Temporal Authority: To what Extent it should be Obeyed', in *Luther's Works*, ed. by Jaroslav Pelikan et al., 55 vols, (St Louis and Philadelphia, 1958-1986), XLV, pp. 81-129 (pp. 112, 113).

Thompson shows, Luther only gradually came round to endorsing resistance to the Emperor, due to the increasing threat to Protestantism posed by Charles V.⁶⁸

Despite Luther's hesitation, Lutherans developed theories to justify resistance in the face of Imperial menace. Cargill Thompson, Skinner and Kingdon describe two theories developed in the early stages of the Reformation. Saxon jurists established a theory based on Roman law, stating that force is always permissible in self-defense—a theory which Luther cautiously endorsed in 1531, after the Emperor threw down the gauntlet at Augsburg.⁶⁹ At the same time, Hessian lawyers developed a constitutional theory stating that the Emperor, an elected monarch, can be resisted by German princes if he breaks his coronation oath, in which he swears to respect the Empire's constitutional liberties.⁷⁰ Whether Robertson was conversant with German political argument is uncertain, but he endorses both these theories. In his account, the German Protestant princes always act in self-defense; Charles is the aggressor. He also sees the German constitution as vital. Discussing the election of Charles, Robertson stresses the importance of coronation oaths: 'It had long been the custom to demand of every new emperor a confirmation of [...] privileges, and to require a promise that he would never violate them' (C I: 351). In Charles's case, extra precautions are taken: 'A *capitulation* or claim of right was formed', stating the privileges of 'every [...] member of the Germanic body', and this Charles 'at his coronation, confirmed [...] in the most solemn manner' (C I: 351). This capitulation, Robertson states, is 'a mutual contract between the emperor and his subjects' which has subsequently always been 'considered in Germany a strong barrier against the progress of the imperial power,

⁶⁸ W.D.J. Cargill-Thompson, 'Luther and the Right of Resistance to the Emperor', in *Studies in the Reformation: Luther to Hooker*, ed. by C.W. Dugmore, (London, 1980), pp. 3-41 (pp. 13-40).

⁶⁹ Martin Luther, 'Dr Martin Luther's Warning to his Dear German People', in *Works*, XLVII, pp. 11-55 (pp. 19, 54-55); see above, p. 174.

⁷⁰ Cargill-Thompson, p. 25; Skinner, *Foundations*, II, pp. 195-196, 198; Kingdon, p. 200-202.

and as the great charter of liberties' (C I: 351-352). Robertson's description of the 'contract' and Charles's confirmation of it is important, because Robertson's account of subsequent German events shows Charles repeatedly violating the German constitution, and Robertson's sympathy with the resistance of the German princes to this suggests that he supports the contractarian view of that constitution. Skinner points out that Calvinist resistance theories were influenced by earlier Lutheran ones.⁷¹ German Lutheran resistance theories, in fact, resemble 'Scottish' Calvinist ones, with which Robertson was undoubtedly familiar. Buchanan's theory is also grounded in a national constitution which, like the German, sees the monarchy as essentially elective, at least in its origins, and stresses the importance of a royal oath: 'Our kings, when they are publicly consecrated, promise the entire people, with an oath, that they will preserve [...] our ancient institutions'.⁷² As Burns mentions, Knox cited the Apology of Magdeburg in his debate about resistance with Maitland of Lethington.⁷³ This was a Lutheran response to Charles V's actions, and resembled Knox's own views in justifying resistance by 'inferior magistrates'.⁷⁴ Whether, Robertson knew German theories at first hand or whether his knowledge of them is only implicit in his familiarity with Knox and Buchanan, he maintains, throughout his account of German events, a favourable attitude to resistance to Charles V.

Charles's growing ambition and intentions regarding the German constitution emerge in the aftermath of Augsburg and the formation of the Smalkaldic League:

Charles, whose ambitious views were enlarged in proportion to the increase of his power and grandeur [...] formed a scheme of continuing

⁷¹ Quentin Skinner, 'The Origins of the Calvinist Theory of Revolution', in *After the Reformation: Essays in Honour of J.H. Hexter*, ed. by Barbara C. Malament, pp. 309-330, (p. 318); *Foundations*, pp. 206-210.

⁷² Buchanan, *Powers*, pp. 106, 107.

⁷³ Burns, *True Law*, p. 178; Knox, *Reformation*, II, pp. 129-130.

⁷⁴ Kingdon, pp. 201-202; Skinner, *Foundations*, II, pp. 208-209.

the Imperial crown in his family by procuring his brother Ferdinand to be elected King of the Romans (C I: 615).

This title was borne by the Emperor-elect before his Papal coronation. The German Protestant princes plainly see Charles's despotic intentions, and Robertson describes their reaction, identifying them as defenders of German liberty:

They perceived clearly the extent of Charles's ambition, that he aimed at rendering the imperial crown hereditary in his family, and would of course establish in the empire an absolute dominion [...] They determined, therefore, to oppose the election of Ferdinand [...] and to rouse their countrymen by their example and exhortation to withstand this encroachment on their liberties (C I: 616-617).

The Elector of Saxony accordingly boycotts the election, and sends his son 'to protest against the election as informal, illegal [...] and subversive of the liberties of the empire' (C I: 617). This string of adjectives suggests a strong empathy in Robertson for the Elector's position.

It is noticeable that Robertson's view of the German constitution in the narrative differs from that in the *Progress*, where he sees it as mere chaos. Germany is characterized by 'private wars, which were carried on with all the violence that usually accompanies resentment when unrestrained by superior authority' (C I: 168). The whole constitution is 'an ill-compacted frame of government' and Robertson even seems disapproving of opposition to Charles when he states that 'the measures on which Charles V was most intent were often thwarted or rendered abortive by the spirit of jealousy and division peculiar to the Germanic constitution' (C I: 171). This is plainly at variance with his views in the narrative, where he is favourable to German obstruction to Charles's attempts. The narrative partially contradicts E.F. Henderson's criticism of Robertson's treatment of the Emperor: 'never once does he grasp the Emperor's real aims, never once does he appreciate the constant striving for national as

well as religious unity'.⁷⁵ In a sense, this is *precisely* what Robertson sees. Like all sixteenth-century monarchs, Charles's conception of unity and order involves an absolutist state created by levelling national constitutional limitations on monarchical power. This is the process of which Kidd and O'Brien mistakenly see Robertson as approving. Henderson is however partly right in that, while Robertson undoubtedly recognizes (and condemns) Charles's attempts at 'unity', he does not see any 'national' element. As I will show, Robertson sees Charles's attitude to Germany as that of a *foreign* despot. A despotic 'national unity' imposed by a cosmopolitan figure with no regard for national feeling naturally offends all Robertson's 'Scottish' beliefs. What makes him all the worse, in Robertson's eyes, is that his despotic ambition leads him to attack Protestantism: 'nothing seemed to lead more certainly to the accomplishment of his design than to employ zeal for the established religion [...] as the instrument of extending his civil authority' (C I: 608-609). In Robertson's view, of course, Catholicism is ideal for assisting despotism.⁷⁶ Charles's war on German liberty and his war on Protestantism are, for Robertson, the same thing. While Charles forces through his brother's election, the Protestant princes also hear that 'prosecutions were commenced in the imperial chamber against some of their religion', and this combined assault on liberty and religion throws them onto the defensive; they renew the Smalkaldic confederation and send ambassadors to France and England for assistance (C I: 617). These actions, combined with the need for the military support of the Protestant princes against the Turks, force Charles to back down at the Diet of Ratisbon. Robertson praises the conduct of the League: 'by their firmness in adhering to their principles, by the unanimity with which they urged all their claims [...] the

⁷⁵ E.F. Henderson, 'Two Lives of the Emperor Charles V', *American Historical Review*, 9 (1903-1904), 23-35, (p. 31).

⁷⁶ See above, p. 131.

Protestants obtained terms which amounted almost to a toleration of their religion' (C I: 619).

These events set the tone for relations between the Emperor and the Protestant princes until the Smalkaldic War of 1546. Charles is unable to proceed against them at once, so he does his best to lull Protestant suspicion with what could vulgarly be called 'Machiavellian' tactics of dissimulation. That he intends to destroy Protestantism is very clear to Robertson, who emphasizes the 'clear evidence of his hostile intentions against the Protestant party' (C II: 143). Unable put these intentions into action, he uses delaying tactics: 'as his schemes were not yet ripe for execution, nor his preparations so far advanced that he could force the compliance of the Protestants [...] he artfully concealed his own intentions' (C II: 142). Charles is very much a 'Machiavellian' figure, a ruler who 'pursued the plan of dissimulation with which he had set out, employing every art to amuse the Protestants and to quiet their fears and jealousy' (C II: 158-159).

The use of 'Machiavellian' tactics is, or can be, a despotic characteristic. Machiavelli's *Prince* is, arguably, a textbook for despots, and Machiavelli describes the seizure of Urbino by the arch-despot Cesare Borgia as an example of the correct employment of deception by a prince. A successful prince must know how 'to be a great hypocrite'. He must 'seem merciful, faithful, humane, trustworthy [...] but his mind should be disposed in such a way that should it become necessary not to be so, he will be able and know how to change to the contrary'. Such conduct is particularly important for 'a new prince'.⁷⁷ This is essentially what Charles is in Germany, which is not his hereditary possession.

While he is pursuing the despotic politics of dissimulation, his relations with

⁷⁷ Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. and trans. by Peter Bonadella and Mark Musa, (Oxford, 1984), pp. 25-26, 59.

Francis I show another despotic characteristic. This is a rashness rooted in despotic vanity, an arrogant divorce from reality from which despots, complacent in their power, tend to suffer. This is especially noticeable in a speech made by Charles to Francis's envoys, in which he hectors the Frenchmen 'with an elevated voice, a haughty tone, and the greatest vehemence of expression' (C II: 16):

If he renders war inevitable, nothing shall divert me from prosecuting it to such extremity as shall reduce one of us to be the poorest gentleman in his own dominions [...] were my resources no more certain, and my hopes of victory no better founded than his, I would instantly throw myself at his feet, and, with folded hands, and a rope about my neck, implore his mercy (C II: 15-16).

This speech is so theatrical, that, had it not been footnoted to French and Spanish sources, one might assume that Robertson was adopting the classical device of inserting impressive speeches where relevant, as Tacitus does with Calgacus. The corruption of despotism is increasingly taking hold of Charles. He is falling into the great trap of all despots, which can be defined classically as hubris, or in Christian terms as the sin of pride. Charles's success in North Africa and against the Turks turns his head, and he makes the mistake of all despots, believing what is said by the flatterers who praise him; this explains his bombastic response to the French envoys:

The orators and poets [...] had exhausted their genius in panegyric on his conduct and merit, to which the astrologers added magnificent promises of a more splendid future in store. Intoxicated with all these, he forgot his usual reserve and moderation, and was unable to restrain this extravagant sally of vanity (C II: 17).

Corruption by flattery is a favourite theme of Buchanan's. In the *De Jure*, he attacks 'sycophants, who encourage royal vices by vanity' and 'increase the malady of rulers'.⁷⁸ Robertson follows the same tradition. Despotic vanity also causes Charles to underestimate his opponent, a characteristic which will eventually cause his downfall: 'he was too apt to underrate and despise the talents of his rival [...] he was blinded by

⁷⁸ Buchanan, *Powers*, p. 128.

the presumption which accompanies prosperity, and relied, perhaps, in some degree, on the prophecies which predicted the increase of his own grandeur' (*C II*: 19). The result of this despotic vanity is predictable: war breaks out, Charles loses it, and Robertson moralizes about this, saying that it 'humbled the emperor's arrogance no less than it checked his power' (*C II*: 26).

In 1546, Charles is at last ready to attack the Protestant princes. He calls a Diet at Ratisbon which the Protestant princes do not attend due to 'apprehension that violence might perhaps be employed [...] to force their approbation of what he should propose in the diet' (*C II*: 163). Charles opens the diet with an 'extremely artful' speech, presenting himself as an impartial arbitrator who 'craved [...] advice with regard to the best and most effective method of restoring union to the churches of Germany' (*C II*: 163, 164). As only Catholics have attended, this speech is effective. The Diet proclaims the authority of the Council of Trent and asks Charles to 'exert the power with which he was invested by the Almighty in [...] compelling the Protestants to acquiesce in its determinations' (*C II*: 164-165). This again seems to illustrate Robertson's thesis that Catholicism is the natural ally of despotism.

Alarmed, the Protestants call for a new Council, to be held in Germany. As Robertson records earlier in the work, this has already been conceded by Charles in 1544 at the Diet of Spires (*C II*: 120-121). The Protestants 'conjured the emperor not to depart from his former plan, and, by offering violence to their consciences, to bring calamities upon Germany' (*C II*: 165). Robertson identifies an attack on Protestantism as an attack on Germany itself and, as always, Charles is the aggressor. Charles's response, when he receives the Protestant appeal, resembles that of Mary of Guise to the Congregation in similar circumstances. To his despotic mentality, there is no need

for him to keep his word, and he receives the Protestant appeal 'with a contemptuous smile' and 'paid no further regard to it' (C II: 165).

Continuing his 'Machiavellian' dissimulation, Charles insists that he is not making war on Protestantism: 'he declared that he took arms not in a religious but a civil quarrel [...] to humble the arrogance of such as had thrown off all sense of that subordination in which they were placed under him' (C II: 168). Robertson is in no doubt that this is false, but 'gross as this deception was', it succeeds (C II: 168). Charles thereby furnishes 'the timid with an excuse for continuing inactive, and the designing [...] with a pretext for joining him' (C II: 168). Robertson's criticisms again suggest the Buchananite tradition of 'public spirit'. Ferguson shows similar concern when he states that citizens who 'imagine that despotical power is best fitted to [...] maintain that they are pleased to call *political order*' make a grave mistake.⁷⁹ For heirs to the 'Scottish' tradition like Robertson and Ferguson, 'public spirit' is more important than 'public order', which can be bought at too high a price.

Robertson therefore commends the 'public spirit' of the princes of the Smalkaldic League, who are not fooled by Charles's law and order argument:

They clearly perceived it to be against the Reformed religion that the emperor had taken arms, and that not only the suppression of it, but the extinction of the German liberties would be the certain consequences of his obtaining such an entire superiority as would enable him to execute his schemes (C II: 170).

The public-spirited princes prepare for resistance, and Robertson describes this in a passage which raises grave doubts about the 'cosmopolitan' or 'British' picture which sees Robertson as wholly devoted to progress, hostile to feudalism, and a man who abandoned 'Scottish' ideology generally:

The feudal institutions [...] enabled the nobles to call out their numerous vassals and to put them in motion on the shortest warning; the martial

⁷⁹ Ferguson, *Essay*, p. 268.

spirit of the Germans, not broken or enervated by the introduction of commerce and the arts, had acquired additional vigour during the continual wars in which they had been employed [...] Upon every opportunity of entering into service, they were accustomed to run eagerly to arms [...] Zeal seconded on this occasion their native ardour. Men on whom that deep impression which accompanies truth when first discovered, prepared to maintain it with proportional vigour; and among a warlike people it appeared infamous to remain inactive when the defence of religion was the motive for taking arms (C II: 173).

The 'Scottish' values of martial vigour, independence and 'zeal' for Protestantism are all strongly in evidence here. There is no sign of the disdain for feudalism that supposedly marks the eighteenth-century 'enlightened' Robertson. It is difficult to believe that the same historian also wrote the *Progress*. In this, commerce is praised at length as something which promotes cosmopolitanism and refinement (C I: 74-79). It 'tends to wear off those prejudices which maintain distinction and animosity between nations. It softens and polishes the manners of men' (C I: 78). This almost paraphrases Montesquieu: 'Commerce cures destructive prejudices, and it is an almost general rule that everywhere there are gentle mores, there is commerce'.⁸⁰ Yet in the narrative, Robertson praises the Germans for *not* having been exposed to 'commerce and the arts', while the concept 'softens and polishes' has become 'broken and enervated'. This suggests Fletcher's view of the corrupting effects of trade and luxury on the martial nobility of Europe.⁸¹ Nothing could show more clearly how Robertson tends to be 'British' or 'cosmopolitan' in general 'conjectural' history, and 'Scottish' in narrative.

Robertson's description of the Smalkaldic War emphasizes Charles's despotism and foreignness. He employs soldiers from his other dominions—Spaniards, Flemings and Italians—and Robertson stresses the offence to patriotism by pointing out that 'even the Catholic provinces were [...] incensed at the introduction of foreigners into

⁸⁰ Montesquieu, *Spirit*, p. 338.

⁸¹ See above, p. 71.

the empire' (C II: 185). Because of this, Charles's armies have difficulty in obtaining supplies anywhere in Germany. By contrast, 'the camp of the confederates abounded with a profusion of all necessities, which the zeal of their friends in the adjacent countries poured in with the utmost liberality and goodwill' (C II: 185-186). Such behaviour is characteristic of people confronting a foreign invader, which is how Robertson sees Charles.

Despite such encouragement, the war goes badly for the Protestants, and Charles treats the Germans in the most despotic manner possible. All surrendering princes are 'compelled to implore mercy in the humble posture of supplicants' (C II: 195). Financial indemnities are imposed with 'rapacious exactness' (C II: 196). The scene in which Charles confronts the defeated Elector of Saxony, John Frederick, is so melodramatic, that one might think it Robertson's invention had it not been footnoted:

The Elector's behaviour was equally magnanimous and decent [...] conscious of his own dignity, he descended to no mean submission unbecoming the high station he held among the German princes. 'The fortune of war', said he, 'have made me your prisoner, most gracious emperor, and I hope to be treated—' Here Charles harshly interrupted him; 'And am I then, at last, acknowledged to be emperor? Charles of Ghent was the only title you lately allowed me. You shall be treated as you deserve'. At these words, he turned from him abruptly, with a haughty air [...] the Elector made no reply, but, with an unaltered countenance, which discovered neither astonishment nor dejection, accompanied the Spanish soldiers appointed to guard him (C II: 227).

The contrast between the nobility of the Elector and the 'haughty' brutality of Charles stresses the evil of despotism. The mention of the soldiers' nationality emphasizes that the Protestant fight against Charles is patriotic as well as religious. This is further shown in Robertson's description of Charles's decision to put the Elector on trial. There exists a constitutional way to try a German prince, but Charles does not use it: 'Instead of consulting the estates of the empire [...] he subjected the greatest prince of

the empire to the jurisdiction of a court-martial composed of Spanish and Italian officers' (C II: 230). Foreignness and despotism are also clear in Robertson's description of the surrender of Landgrave Philip of Hesse. Charles, who assumes the 'imperious tone of a conqueror [...] insisted on unconditional surrender' (C II: 236). After Philip is made to grovel before Charles, it emerges that he, too 'must remain a prisoner [...] under the custody of a Spanish guard' (C II: 239). In his descriptions of these events, Robertson makes clear that Charles is not a national ruler restoring order, but a foreign despot imposing his will on a country in which he 'gave laws to the Germans like a conquered people' (C II: 244).

This is also evident in his religious moves. A diet is called at Augsburg to resolve the religious issue, and Charles, who 'durst not trust the determination of a matter so interesting to the free suffrages of the Germans [...] entered the city at the head of his Spanish troops' (C II: 246). As the Diet is held under the guns of a foreign army, it is unsurprising that it results in the Interim of Augsburg, by which 'Every doctrine [...] peculiar to Popery was retained, and the observation of all the rites which the Protestants considered as inventions of man introduced into the worship of God was enjoined' (C II: 267). Once this document has been read, the Diet's President, the Catholic Archbishop-Elector of Mentz, hastily 'in the name of the diet, signified their approbation of the system of doctrine which had been read' (C II: 257). Constitutional violation is thus added to religious bullying, as Robertson stresses: 'The whole assembly was amazed at a declaration so unprecedented and unconstitutional, as well as at the elector's presumption in pretending to declare the sense of the diet upon a point which had not [...] been the subject of debate' (C II: 258).

The Emperor then rigorously enforces the Interim. As Augsburg is hostile to it, he overthrows that city's constitution, substituting by an 'act of power [...]

unprecedented as well as arbitrary' a new form of government by 'men who had no other merit than their servile devotion to the emperor's will' (*C II*: 264).

Charles's despotic ambitions are now fulfilled, but his fall is imminent. Charles is brought down by the manoeuvres of Maurice of Saxony, but also, as emerges in Robertson's account, by the corruption which despotic power works on rulers.

Maurice is an awkward figure. Although he becomes the saviour of Protestantism and German liberty, he sides with Charles during the Smalkaldic War and is rewarded for this with the Electorate of his cousin, the virtuous John Frederick (*C II*: 259). With Maurice, Robertson cannot sustain the division he has hitherto maintained, between virtuous, patriotic German Protestant princes and the 'Machiavellian' foreign despot Charles. There is, accordingly, an element of ambiguity in Robertson's treatment of Maurice's motives (*C II*: 276-277). Self-interest has to be acknowledged, but, by his usual Tacitean devices, Robertson makes it clear that he sees selfless motives as more significant. He admits that Maurice owes his increased power and dignity to 'his address in paying court to the emperor, and by the seeming zeal with which he forwarded all his ambitious schemes' (*C II*: 276). However, this does not, to Robertson, make him any less concerned about Charles's actions, on patriotic and anti-despotic grounds:

He saw the yoke that was preparing for his country and, from the [...] formidable progress of the imperial power, was convinced that but a few steps more remained to be taken in order to render Charles as absolute a monarch in Germany as he had become in Spain (*C II*: 276).

Maurice also sees that 'Charles was bent on exacting a rigid conformity to the doctrines and rites of the Romish Church' (*C II*: 276). Robertson insists that Maurice, 'notwithstanding all the confidences in the emperor which he had made from [...] interest or an excess of confidence in the emperor, was sincerely attached to the Lutheran tenets' (*C II*: 277). Because of this, 'he determined not to be a tame spectator

of the overthrow of a system which he believed to be founded in truth' (*C II*: 277). Robertson admits that 'This resolution, flowing from the love of liberty zeal for religion, was strengthened by political and interested considerations' (*C II*: 277). Maurice's new Electoral dignity means that 'new and more extensive prospects opened to his view' and Maurice 'neither wanted discernment to see the advantages of this pre-eminence, nor ambition to aim at attaining it' (*C II*: 277). It is clear, however, that interest is not Maurice's primary motive; it only 'strengthens' his patriotic, anti-despotic and religious motivations. For Hume, on the other hand, Maurice is entirely motivated by a personal grudge against Charles: 'Maurice [...] enraged that the landgrave of Hesse, who, by his advice, and on his assurances, had put himself into the emperor's hands, should be unjustly detained a prisoner, formed a secret conspiracy among the protestant princes'.⁸² Robertson notes this grudge (*C II*: 278), but, as is discussed above, he also attributes other, more noble motives to Maurice.

Maurice accordingly sets out to bring Charles down. In doing this, he has to 'guard [...] against giving a premature alarm to the emperor' and so 'applied all his powers of art and dissimulation' to this end (*C II*: 278, 279). Maurice is as 'Machiavellian' in his politics as Charles is, but, as his dissimulation is used in a cause of which Robertson approves, he is not censorious. Maurice proceeds by small steps. He secures command of an army to reduce rebellious Magdeburg (*C II*: 283). When this army is disbanded, the soldiers are re-enlisted, ostensibly as mercenaries under another prince for a private quarrel (*C II*: 301). A secret alliance is made with Henry II of France (*C II*: 309-311). Astonishingly, Charles fears nothing. Robertson's examination of this is crucial in considering his views on despotism, patriotism, conquest and empire. 'This credulous security', he states, 'in a prince who [...] was

⁸² Hume, *History*, III, p. 412

commonly led to an excess of distrust, may seem unaccountable' (C II: 315).

Robertson, however, has an explanation: 'he entertained such a high opinion of his own abilities, and held the political talents of the Germans in such contempt that he despised all the intimations given him concerning Maurice's secret machinations' (C II: 315). His Flemish minister Granvelle strengthens this delusion, saying that 'a drunken German head was too gross to form any scheme which he could not easily penetrate and baffle' (C II: 315). Charles's 'credulous security' is founded partly in despotic delusion about his invincibility, but also in that contempt of dominating powers for supposedly 'inferior' peoples, which Robertson sees the French having for the Scots and which is vital in the relations of Charles's own Spaniards with the Amerindians in *America*.⁸³ It is this 'imperial' contempt, to which Robertson's 'Scottish' sensibilities are always attuned, which causes Charles to underestimate Maurice.

The result is that Charles is taken unawares when Maurice finally takes arms. He has to flee precipitately over the Alps 'in utmost confusion' (C II:325). Nemesis has overtaken hubris, and pride has had its fall, as Robertson notices:

In this miserable plight, very unlike the pomp in which Charles had appeared during the five preceding years as the conqueror of Germany, he arrived at length at Villach [...] and scarcely thought himself secure even in that remote, inaccessible corner (C II: 325).

From here on, Charles's fortunes go downhill. He has to back down to Maurice and his allies, and the Peace of Passau of 1552 signifies the defeat of all his ambitions: The Peace

overturned the vast fabric in erecting which Charles had expended so many years and had exerted the utmost efforts of his power and policy; [...] annulled all his regulations with regard to religion, defeated all his hopes of rendering the imperial authority absolute and hereditary in his family, and established the Protestant Church [...] upon a firm and secure basis (C II: 339).

⁸³ See above, pp. 113-114.

Maurice, who 'reaped all the glory of having concerted this unexpected revolution', dies shortly afterwards (*C II*: 339, 359). According to Pocock, Robertson's 'epitaph for Maurice is an exercise in historical irony'.⁸⁴ Admittedly, Robertson sees irony in the situation, noting the 'singular circumstance' that 'the Reformation should be indebted for its security and full establishment in Germany to the same hand which had brought it to the brink of destruction' by originally siding with Charles (*C II*: 339).

Furthermore, Maurice is assisted by the King of France, who, while assisting German Protestants 'was persecuting his own Protestant subjects with all the fierceness of bigotry' (*C II*: 339). This alliance is, indeed, an indication of balance-of-power politics, but, as Pocock states, Robertson may have regarded events as indicative of the mysterious workings of Providence, forwarding the Reformation.⁸⁵ Whatever reason Robertson may find for the irony inherent in the situation, however, his 'epitaph' for Maurice is not, as Pocock believes, ironical, but admiring (*C II*: 359-360). It begins with a Tacitean appearance of balance, stating that Maurice cannot be 'praised as a virtuous man', but is 'a great prince', which again shows Robertson's willingness to endorse 'Machiavellian' behaviour in a cause which he favours. (*C II*: 359). After this, the picture is largely commendatory:

At the very juncture when the emperor had attained to almost unlimited despotism, Maurice, with power seemingly inadequate [...] compelled him to relinquish all his usurpations, and established not only the religious but the civil liberties of Germany on such foundations as have hitherto remained unshaken (*C II*: 360).

Robertson's statement that Maurice could beat Charles despite 'inadequate' resources, again suggests acknowledgement of Providence. Robertson sees the triumph of 'men destitute of power' during the Reformation as clear evidence of Providential

⁸⁴ Pocock, *Barbarism*, II, p. 295.

⁸⁵ Pocock, *Barbarism*, II, p. 295.

influence.⁸⁶ It is a point also made by Knox about the Scottish Reformation: 'For what was our force? What was our number? [...] Our very enemies can bear witness. And yet in how great purity God did establish amongst us his true religion'.⁸⁷

Maurice dies full of honour, remembered as a hero, the 'faithful guardian of the constitution and laws of his country' (C II: 360). Charles's end is very different. Worn out by ill health and defeat, he abdicates. As he journeys towards the monastery in Spain in which he is to retire, Robertson shows the destruction of his despotic illusions. At Burgos, only a handful of Spanish nobles bother to welcome him, and Charles 'felt, for the first time, that he was no longer a monarch' (C II: 444). In fact his whole life has been based on vanity and illusion:

Accustomed [...] to the dutiful and officious respect with which those who possess sovereign power are attended, he had received it with the credulity common to princes, and was sensibly mortified when he now discovered that he had been indebted to his rank and power for much of that obsequious regard which he had fondly thought was paid to his personal qualities (C II: 444).

This is a clear indication that Robertson sees despotism as morally corrupting to the despot himself, as well as politically indefensible. Charles, in retirement, becomes a pathetic figure. He takes up the study of clocks, and Robertson uses this as an opportunity for another homily about despotic vanity. Unable to bring his clocks to 'go exactly alike' Charles 'reflected [...] on his own folly in having bestowed so much time and labour on the more vain attempt of bringing mankind to a precise uniformity of sentiment' (C II: 482). Hume also repeats this story; his description of Charles's retirement ends with it.⁸⁸ Robertson, however, hammers home his point by showing Charles's degeneration into senility and Catholic superstition. His ill health 'enfeebled his mind' and in this period 'an illiberal and timid superstition depressed his spirit'

⁸⁶ See above, p. 169.

⁸⁷ Knox, *Reformation*, II, p. 3.

⁸⁸ Hume, *History*, III, p. 446.

(C II: 483). He surrounds himself with monks, scourges himself, and dementedly holds his own funeral, 'an act [...] as wild an uncommon as any that superstition ever suggested to a weak and disordered fancy' (C II: 483). During the service, Charles, lying in his coffin, 'joined in the prayers which were offered up for the rest of his soul, mingling his tears with those which his attendants shed, as if they had been celebrating a real funeral' (C II: 484). He dies soon afterwards.

Robertson's view of Charles on the one hand, and the German princes on the other, together with his view of events in Spain, support an alternative argument to the 'cosmopolitan' and 'British' views. This argument, in which Robertson's 'Scottish' values lead him to reject the supposed advantages of strong monarchy in favor of national and political and Protestant liberty, emerges most clearly in Robertson's specific narrative treatment of events in Charles's own domains, Germany and Spain. Consideration of this treatment seems important in evaluating the work. It is not, after all, a history of Europe—although the nature of Charles's empire makes it partly so—but is called, specifically, a history of Charles's reign. Charles's dealings with his own territories are plainly more significant to Robertson than his general effect on other European states, or on Europe as a whole. This is particularly so as these dealings include trying to crush the Reformation. That Robertson's most emphatic treatment occurs in the sections on Spain and Germany seems confirmed by John Blair's report of the work's reception: 'The Ministry of *Cardinal Ximenes* and the *Conduct of Luther* are favourite passages'.⁸⁹ Authorities who hold the 'cosmopolitan' position have avoided the specific and concentrated on the general, especially the *Progress*. O'Brien, for example, devotes six pages of her consideration of *Charles V* to the *Progress*, and discusses the Reformation only in the general terms of the supposed

⁸⁹ John Blair to Robertson, 13/4/1769, *R-McD*, MS 3942, f. 89.

effects which Robertson sees it having on Europe as a whole (*NE*: 136-141, 141-148). Specific events in Germany are given no attention. The *Progress* makes up about a quarter of the whole work, and Robertson's main focus on the Reformation is on specific German events, from the advent of Luther to Charles's defeat by Maurice. The approach taken by O'Brien is therefore misleading. That examination of specific events is avoided by 'cosmopolitan' authorities is unsurprising, because such examination comes close to overturning their thesis. On the other hand, such examination shows clearly the persistence of 'Scottish' values in Robertson's work. *Charles V* also introduces an 'imperial' element, in that Charles is an Emperor and, in Robertson's view, a conqueror. His strong disapproval of such 'imperial' manifestations is also a 'Scottish' value, and it appears more fully in Robertson's next history, that of America.

CHAPTER VI

America

Robertson has been called a 'spokesman for empire'.¹ This view is founded upon the 'stadial' portions of Robertson's *America*. However, as I shall discuss, another view can be provided by a consideration of the larger, narrative portions of *America*, and this view is significantly connected to 'Scottish' thought.

Marinell Ash, discussing Bruce and Wallace, notices that their fight was 'an early example of a war of national liberation; a prototype for a kind of conflict common in our own century'; such conflicts, she says, 'heighten [...] a sense of national identity'.² In linking Scottish patriotism to anti-colonial struggles, Ash unconsciously follows an old tradition. 'Scottish' defensive patriotism often led Scots to sympathize with other peoples threatened by foreign domination, and so to view conquest and empire building with a jaundiced eye.

1) Scots and Empire

From a Scottish perspective, 'empire' has three aspects, only one of which is compatible with the defensive patriotic position. This is the sense in which 'imperial' is synonymous with 'independent'. It is this aspect Anderson discussed when he defended Scotland's 'imperial' crown, and which Robertson stresses when he calls Scotland's crown 'imperial and independent' (SI: 213).³ Even this 'imperial' aspect presents problems to the 'Scottish' Whig Presbyterian tradition. As Mason shows, this 'imperial crown' concept has inescapable implications of absolutism and royal supremacy in

¹ Smitten, 'William Robertson', p. 266.

² Marinell Ash, 'William Wallace and Robert the Bruce: The Life and Death of a National Myth', in *The Myths We Live By*, ed. by Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson, (London and New York, 1990), pp. 83-94, (p. 86).

³ See above, pp. 40-41.

religion, which would not appeal to anti-Erastian Presbyterian advocates of limited monarchy.⁴ It is for this reason that, as Kidd says, 'Jacobites were [...] better able to exploit the history of Scotland's imperial crown' after 1707, thus 'promoting simultaneously [...] the languages of absolutism and liberty, defining Scottish freedom in terms of subordination to a native Scottish imperial crown' (*SSP*: 74). Whigs, though patriotic, found it 'difficult to make a clear distinction between an imperial and an absolute crown' (*SSP*: 75). The 'Scottish' tradition clearly has difficulty even with an 'imperial' concept that buttresses the defensive patriotism which forms so important a part of that tradition.

A wider concept of 'empire' is a 'British empire', meaning a united Britain. This idea had an early Scottish exponent in John Major, who in 1521 advocated a united realm, created by dynastic marriages, as a solution to Scottish-English conflict.⁵ Throughout the early sixteenth century, Henry VIII and Protector Somerset promoted the idea of dynastic union, in which Henry's son, later Edward VI, would marry the young Queen Mary. Mason and Williamson point out that a united 'imperial' Britain was promoted by the English as essential to the Protestant cause; a united Protestant realm for which Providence had created the appropriate dynastic circumstances. In this propaganda, much use was made of the 'history' of Geoffrey of Monmouth, including the figure of Constantine the Great.⁶ In Geoffrey's account, Constantine was a British king before becoming a Roman emperor.⁷ 'Britain', to Geoffrey and English advocates of a united 'imperial' realm, was an Anglocentric realm including Scotland. As Emperor, the British Constantine re-united the Roman world and Christianized it. The

⁴ Mason, 'Anglo-British Imperialism', pp. 168-169, 182-183.

⁵ Major, pp. 41-42, 186, 218.

⁶ Mason, 'Anglo-British Imperialism', pp. 168-175; Arthur H. Williamson, 'Scots, Indians and Empire: The Scottish Politics of Civilization, 1519-1609', *Past and Present*, 150 (1996), 46-83, (pp. 66-67).

⁷ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*, ed. and trans. by Lewis Thorpe, (London, 1966), pp. 132-133.

analogy of Constantine was therefore attractive to English advocates of 'imperial' union. As Mason shows, however, English invasions of Scotland during the period caused many Scots to suspect that the English conception of an 'imperial' Britain meant only a renewed attempt to subjugate Scotland.⁸ In the eighteenth century, Robertson shows a patriotic awareness of this when describing Henry VIII's demand that the infant Mary be committed to his custody, with the government of Scotland, prior to her marriage with his son. Robertson states that 'Henry could not have prescribed more ignominious conditions to a conquered people, and it is no wonder they were rejected [...] by men who scorned to purchase an alliance with England at the price of their own liberty' (SI: 311).

James VI was enthusiastic about an 'imperial' Britain, and, as Mason and Williamson discuss, the Constantine analogy was revived during his reign.⁹ The 'imperial' concept is especially relevant after 1603, because James was then in a position to make it real. In the early seventeenth century, he tried to bring about a more unified arrangement than the purely regnal one created in 1603. In this he was supported by Thomas Craig, who, however, insisted on a union of equals.¹⁰ Such insistence reflects enduring suspicion of the 'imperial' unionist idea. As John Robertson points out, many Scots in James's day feared the reduction of Scotland to a province of England.¹¹

Suspicion of a united Britain is reflected by Scottish writers with a strong sense of defensive patriotism. Fordun in the fourteenth century was already disputing the

⁸ Roger A. Mason, 'Scotching the Brut: Politics, History and National Myth in Sixteenth-Century Britain', in *Scotland and England*, pp. 60-84, (pp. 67-71); 'Anglo-British Imperialism', p. 176.

⁹ Williamson, 'National Consciousness', pp. 92-93; 'Scots, Indians', p. 63; Mason, 'Anglo-British Imperialism', p. 184.

¹⁰ See above, p. 41.

¹¹ John Robertson, 'Empire and Union: Two Concepts of the Early Modern European Political Order', in *Union for Empire*, pp. 3-36, (pp. 15-16).

Galfridian British realm that included Scotland.¹² Buchanan dismissed the Galfridian Britain as a 'fabulous empire'.¹³ As Williamson notes, Buchanan is also unenthusiastic about Constantine, whose mother he describes as a concubine rather than the British princess Geoffrey makes her.¹⁴

James also used an 'imperial' concept—that of conquest—to justify his monarchical principles. According to him, Fergus I, the first king of Scotland, conquered Scotland and imposed his laws on it. Kings therefore were the first lawmakers, existing before estates and nobility.¹⁵ For Buchanan, the foe of monarchical power, Fergus was summoned from Ireland by the Scots and elected king 'by the publick Consent of the People'.¹⁶ Presbyterians, for whom Buchanan's theory became an ideological cornerstone, tended to oppose 'imperial' views. They suspected implications of English domination and a related royal supremacy in religion, particularly as Scottish promoters of the 'imperial' Constantinian model in James's reign linked it to an Episcopalian church.¹⁷ Similarly, the 'conquest' model of Scotland's history did not appeal to Presbyterian foes of absolutism. Rutherford cites Buchanan to refute James VI's version of the Fergus story.¹⁸

Suspicion of English intentions resurfaced in the years preceding 1707. Fletcher again provides the obvious example. As John Robertson points out, Fletcher's works suggest support for a confederal solution to the Scottish-English problem, but he was

¹² See above, p. 35.

¹³ Buchanan, *History*, I, p. 50.

¹⁴ Williamson, 'Scots, Indians', pp. 68-69; Buchanan, *History*, I, p. 150; Geoffrey, p. 132.

¹⁵ James VI and I, 'The Trve Lawe of free Monarchies: or The Reciproock and Mvtuall Dvtie betwixt a free King and his naturall Subjects', in *Minor Prose Works of King James VI and I*, ed. by James Craigie and Alexander Law (Edinburgh, 1982), pp. 83-99, (p. 70).

¹⁶ Buchanan, *History*, I, p. 115.

¹⁷ Roger A. Mason, 'George Buchanan, James VI and the Presbyterians', in *Scots and Britons*, pp. 112-137, (pp. 128-129); Williamson, 'National Consciousness', pp. 92-94.

¹⁸ Rutherford, *Lex, Rex*, p. 224.

critical of the English approach to union.¹⁹ English union with Wales he describes as ‘attended with great imperfections and inconveniences’, and he points out that England has never shown any inclination to unite on equal terms even with its own American colonies. The English ‘inveterate malice towards the Scots’ casts suspicion on English unionist intentions, and English treatment of Ireland is thoroughly unjust.²⁰

The link between the ‘Scottish’ tradition and opposition to a greater ‘Britain’ would seem to disappear after 1707. The main critics of union after that year are Jacobites, who tended to be Episcopalian or even Catholic and who were theoretically committed to absolute, indefeasible hereditary monarchy. Scottish Presbyterian Whigs like Robertson are held to have wholeheartedly favoured union. However, as I have tried to show, events like the militia agitations show that such Scots were not wholly satisfied with the Union, and that a non-Jacobite, Fletcherian sense of patriotism continued to exist after 1707.

The third sense in which Scots have considered ‘empire’ is the expansionist one. It is possible to find a connection between the defensively patriotic, anti-absolutist and often Presbyterian aspects of the ‘Scottish’ tradition and hostility to expansionist ‘empire’. Tacitus, after all, provides a precedent for more than Scottish patriotism. Calgacus’s speech, though made in the context of the Roman invasion of Caledonia, is a general indictment of Roman imperialism. Furthermore, Tacitus’s treatment of figures who fought Roman imperialism—Boadicea, the German Arminius and the Batavian Civilis—also suggests dubiousness about Rome’s imperial activities.²¹

Even before the age of expansion, suspicion of conquest is evident in Scottish

¹⁹ John Robertson, ‘Andrew Fletcher’s Vision of Union’, in *Scotland and England*, pp. 203-225, (pp. 203-204, 213-214); ‘Empire and Union’, p. 33; ‘Union Debate’, pp. 208-209, 226.

²⁰ Fletcher, ‘Conversation’, pp. 196, 197, 201.

²¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, pp. 66, 81-82, 99-100, 119, 328-330; *The Histories*, ed. and trans. by Kenneth Wellesley, revised edn, (London, 1991), pp. 211-229, 286-287.

writers. Fordun describes the proto-Scot Gaythelos repenting of having ‘insulted territory held from heaven by another people’ by conquering Spain. Even the Scottish king Reuda is criticized for being ‘too much given to hankering after the extension of the frontiers of his kingdom’.²² Even at this early date, the purely defensive nature of the patriotic tradition is plain, and Scotland is unusual among European nations in that this patriotism never made the transformation into the aggressive, conquering variety, which happened in England and Spain. Scotland, *as Scotland*, never experienced a period of aggressive expansionism, which even unlikely countries like Poland and Sweden have done. Only after Scotland’s incorporation in Britain did Scots begin to play a significant imperial role, and then it was as ‘Britons’ rather than ‘Scots’. The nineteenth century, in which a meaningful ‘Scottishness’ is arguably absent, is also the period of greatest Scottish involvement in empire.

Hostility to expansionism becomes significant in the sixteenth century, with the beginning of European New World endeavours. It is possible to identify two strands of Scottish thought. Scots like Major, James VI and I and Craig, who favour a unified Britain, favour expansion and despise ‘inferior’ peoples. Those writers who show suspicion of an ‘imperial’ united Britain are also hostile to expansion and conquest.

John Major, as Kidd notes, objected to over-powerful nobility (*SSP*: 19). This objection has an expansionist dimension: when the French nobility were too strong, he states, ‘the empire of the French underwent but small extension’.²³ As Arthur Williamson notes, Major was also ‘an apologist for the Spanish conquest of the New World’. Major states that Amerindians ‘live like beasts’ and, basing himself on Aristotle, believes that ‘the first person to conquer them, justly rules over them because

²² Fordun, pp. 13, 42.

²³ Major, p. 384.

they are by nature slaves'.²⁴ As D.A. Brading and Anthony Pagden discuss, Major was cited by Spaniards to justify their New World activity.²⁵

James VI and I promoted a New World scheme in Nova Scotia, and, as, Williamson shows, he despised Amerindians.²⁶ He calls them 'the barbarous Indians' and criticizes the 'vncleanly and adust constitution of their bodies'.²⁷ Urging fortitude in the face of a second Spanish Armada in 1596, James tells his people to 'abhorre the beastlie Indians, whose unworthie particulars made the way patent of their miserable subjection and slaverie under the Spaniards'.²⁸ Again, there is a conviction that Indians are only fit for slavery. As John Robertson briefly notices, there are expansionist hints in the writings of Craig as well.²⁹ Craig admires Spain as 'a powerful empire' and believes that a united Britain could also reach 'the pinnacle of greatness by following in the footsteps and pursuing the methods of Spain'. In 1605, when Craig wrote, the New World was of course part of the 'single mighty empire [...] incorporated under one sovereign' which Craig admires.³⁰

Buchanan's views are very different. Williamson identifies hostility to Portuguese expansion in Buchanan's verse, which he connects to Buchanan's suspicion of an Anglocentric British entity.³¹ Of particular interest is the longest of Buchanan's anti-imperial poems, *In colonias Brasilienses vel sodomites a Lusitanis missos in Brasiliam*, partly translated in one of Williamson's articles:

²⁴ Quoted in Arthur H. Williamson, 'George Buchanan, Civic Virtue and Commerce: European Imperialism and its Sixteenth-Century Critics', *Scottish Historical Review*, 75 (1996), 20-37, (p. 22); 'Scots, Indians', p. 58.

²⁵ D.A. Brading, *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots and the Liberal State, 1492-1867*, (Cambridge, 1991), p. 80; Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology*, (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 38-41.

²⁶ Williamson, 'Sixteenth-Century Critics', p. 34; 'Scots, Indians', p. 63.

²⁷ James VI and I, 'A Counterblaste to Tobacco', in *Minor Prose Works*, pp. 83-99, (pp. 87-88).

²⁸ David Calderwood, *History of the Kirk of Scotland*, 8 vols, (Edinburgh 1843-1849), V, p. 391.

²⁹ John Robertson, 'Empire and Union', p. 15.

³⁰ Thomas Craig, *De Unione*, pp. 261, 262, 303.

³¹ Williamson, 'Sixteenth-Century Critics', pp. 26-31; 'Scots, Indians', pp. 76-81.

We swept unknown waters with our prows; we went after peaceful peoples with the terror of war, and we stirred misery and tumult into the peace of the world [...] Those people [i.e., the Brazilians], hospitable to no guests, and shores accustomed to an unspeakable diet [i.e., human flesh], have looked upon sights more disgraceful than the bloody feasts of the Cyclops.³²

This extract shows the Portuguese as marauding barbarians, descending upon inoffensive peoples, and suggests that they are morally inferior to the Indians. These themes are strongly present in Robertson's history. Making supposed barbarians morally superior to the 'civilized' is a Tacitean trick—the *Germania* praises German virtues in order to criticize Roman vices.³³ It could be argued that there is nothing particularly 'Scottish' about Buchanan's views by pointing out that Montaigne, writing on Amerindians, states that they cannot be called barbarians 'in comparison with ourselves, who surpass them in every kind of barbarism'.³⁴ Montaigne was, like Buchanan, familiar with Tacitus. Such evidence need not detract from the 'Scottishness' of Buchanan's anti-imperial ideas, or those of Scots that came after him. For one thing, Buchanan, who spent some time teaching in France, had Montaigne as a pupil.³⁵ Besides, if national differences are irrelevant because of classical influence, then any comparative study of European writing is redundant. Furthermore, there are, as I shall show, differences between 'Scottish' and French perceptions of Amerindians, particularly in the eighteenth century.

I have suggested that Presbyterianism is hostile to 'imperial' attitudes, but Scottish Presbyterians have, at times, favoured integration with England. Knox favoured dynastic marriage between Henry VIII's son and Queen Mary, to strengthen the Protestant cause. That Scotland and England both had young unmarried royalty

³² Williamson, 'Scots, Indians', p. 78.

³³ Tacitus, *Germania*, esp. pp. 117-118

³⁴ Michel de Montaigne, 'On the Cannibals', in *The Essays of Michel de Montaigne*, ed. and trans. by M.A. Screech, (London, 1991), pp. 228-241 (p. 236).

³⁵ I.D. McFarlane, *Buchanan*, (London, 1981) p. 95.

available he regarded as evidence of ‘the wonderful Providence of God’.³⁶ The Solemn League and Covenant of 1643 theoretically established religious unity, and, as David Stevenson describes, Scottish Covenanters may have aimed at federal political union as well.³⁷ At the same time, however, Presbyterianism has inescapably patriotic connections. Keith Brown notes that, in the seventeenth century, ‘the Church of Scotland [...] provided the most effective institutional vehicle for a national identity’, and this means the *Presbyterian* Church. Episcopalianism was associated with English innovations in church matters.³⁸ That Presbyterianism should be linked to patriotism and, consequently, to a suspicion of ‘imperial’ manifestations is unsurprising, because threats to Presbyterianism have always had foreign associations. In the early years of the Reformation, the threat came from French-backed Catholicism. In the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, English-style church government and ritual were forced on Scotland by Anglicized Stuart monarchs. After the Revolution, Presbyterians again saw the threat coming from French-backed Catholicism in the shape of the Stuarts, whom the Jacobites wished to restore.

Covenanting, which gave Scotland a special status among nations, analogous to Old Testament Israel, can be seen as a kind of religious patriotism. Rutherford expresses such a view, stating that ‘My Lord Jesus hath a word hid in heaven for Scotland, not yet brought out’.³⁹ Significantly, Rutherford devotes a section of his treatise *Lex, Rex* to ‘Whether or Not a Kingdom May Lawfully be Purchased by the Sole Title of Conquest’. He disputes the Aristotelian doctrine of ‘natural slavery’ and points out that,

³⁶ Knox, *Reformation*, I, p. 46.

³⁷ David Stevenson, ‘The Early Covenanters and the Federal Union of Britain’, in *Scotland and England*, pp. 163-181 (pp. 163-164, 177-178).

³⁸ Keith M. Brown, ‘Scottish Identity in the Seventeenth Century’, in *British Consciousness and Identity: The Making of Britain 1533-1707*, ed. by Brendan Bradshaw and Peter Roberts, (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 236-258 (pp. 247, 250).

³⁹ Rutherford to James Hamilton, 7/7/1637, in *Letters of Rutherford*, p. 109.

if conquest is a legitimate basis for political rule, then the conquests of Israel, the actions of Herod and the persecutions of Christians by Roman Emperors must all be legitimate.⁴⁰

The late seventeenth century saw Scottish colonization projects mounted in East Jersey and Carolina. Scots in these areas tended to look favourably on the Amerindians. George Pratt Insh notes that Scots in East Jersey regarded local Indians benevolently.⁴¹ Ned Landsman points out that the East Jersey project was the creation of Episcopalian and Quaker Proprietors, who 'represented some of the most Anglicized elements in Scottish society', while Carolina was the work of doggedly Scottish Presbyterian Covenanters.⁴² It is in Carolina, importantly, that we find a close, militant alliance between Scots and Indians.⁴³ In the 1680's, Lord Cardross, who had suffered under the anti-Presbyterian persecutions of the late seventeenth century, set up a colony of Covenanters in Carolina.⁴⁴ Carolina was ruled by English Proprietors, and records show increasing English concern about Scottish relations with Indians and the nearby Florida Spaniards. In 1685, numerous Yamassee Indians, dispossessed by the Spaniards, appeared in the Scots colony. Worried reports describe the Scots arming them. Cardross was, in fact, worried about a Spanish threat, and requested cannon to be sent to him from Charleston. Later in 1685, the Yamassees attacked a Spanish Mission—significantly, a Catholic settlement. In retaliation for this, the Spaniards annihilated the Scottish colony in 1687, which the English Proprietors regarded as a satisfactory end to a nuisance. They insisted that Spanish action was a justified reprisal for Scottish-backed

⁴⁰ Rutherford, 'Lex, Rex', pp. 46, 48, 50.

⁴¹ George Pratt Insh, *Scottish Colonial Schemes 1620-1686*, (Glasgow, 1922), pp. 169, 248, 276.

⁴² Ned C. Landsman, *Scotland and its First American Colony 1683-1765*, (Princeton, 1983), pp. 103-104, 106, 107.

⁴³ Insh, pp. 209-211.

⁴⁴ *Journal of the Honourable John Erskine of Carnock 1683-1687*, ed. by Walter MacLeod, (Edinburgh, 1893), pp. 69, 72, 139.

Indian attacks: 'such action was unjustifiable in the Scots, and we shall not protect the Indians against the consequences of such aggression'.⁴⁵

This episode suggests sympathy between Scots driven out of their country by persecution and Indians dispossessed by Spaniards. The circumstances of Scots and Indians fighting Spanish domination against a background of English hostility were repeated in Darien.

Darien shows the closest connection between 'Scottish' defensive patriotism and sympathy with other peoples threatened with foreign domination. The Darien scheme appears to contradict a thesis about 'Scottish' hostility to empire. It involved a move into territory which, to the Scots, did not belong to any European power, which looks like a definitely 'imperial' enterprise. However, as David Armitage discusses, the Scots saw their scheme as a new type of colonial venture, very different from the corrupt and corrupting empire building hitherto practiced by Europeans.⁴⁶ It was also emphatically not to be based on conquest. One of its supporters was Fletcher, whose views on conquest are consistently 'Scottish'. Discussing Spain, Fletcher calls Spanish treatment of Amerindians 'an eternal reproach' and criticizes Spanish ambitions in America which made it 'necessary to exterminate its peoples'. For Fletcher, a vital point about his scheme for re-organizing Europe was that the new polities should be 'of a sufficient force to defend themselves, but [...] unfit to make conquests. For the ambitious desires of men to encrease their dominions, have always been the principal cause of disturbing the peace of the world'.⁴⁷ Such anti-expansionist views give a 'Scottish' twist to civic humanism as seen by men like Buchanan and Fletcher. Pocock sees Fletcher as a 'neo-

⁴⁵ *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series: America and the West Indies, 1685-1688, preserved in the Public Record Office*, ed. by J.W. Fortescue, (London, 1899), pp. 5-6, 19, 23, 40, 336-337, 451.

⁴⁶ David Armitage, 'The Scottish Vision of Empire: Intellectual Origins of the Darien Venture', in *Union for Empire*, pp. 97-118 (pp. 102-105).

⁴⁷ Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, 'Discourse concerning the Affairs of Spain', in *Political Works*, pp. 83-117 (pp. 90, 97); 'Conversation', p. 207.

Harringtonian', whose political thought owed much to James Harrington and, through him, to Machiavelli.⁴⁸ Machiavelli, however, believed that politics should be constructed with expansion in mind, which is why he preferred Rome to Sparta.⁴⁹ Harrington gives a lecture on the proper way to prevent provinces becoming independent, and sees no reason why his commonwealth of 'Oceana', meaning the Cromwellian state, should not emulate Roman expansion.⁵⁰

Machiavelli, an Italian looked to Rome for an 'imperial' patriotic tradition. Harrington wrote in the 1650's, when Cromwell had conquered Scotland ('Marpesia' in Harrington's *Oceana*), subdued Ireland and was pursuing an aggressive New World policy. English patriotism had, in any case, an aggressive, expansionist tinge since Elizabethan times. The 'Scottish' tradition of patriotism is purely defensive, and this may explain why writers like Fletcher disliked conquest. So, while civic humanism is undoubtedly cosmopolitan, dislike for conquest and expansion provides a 'Scottish' variation.

Hostility to conquest, and sympathy with its victims are significant features of Scottish writings promoting Darien. Even after the Scottish venture had collapsed, its motivator William Paterson continued to advocate schemes which would enable 'the natives to break and shake off the unjust and tyrannical yoke of the Spaniards' and allow the achievement of economic pre-eminence 'without contracting such guilt, and blood, as Alexander or Caesar'.⁵¹

⁴⁸ J.G.A. Pocock, 'Machiavelli, Harrington and English Political Ideologies in the Eighteenth Century', in *Politics, Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History*, New York, 1971), pp. 104-147 (pp. 134); *Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 427, 431.

⁴⁹ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, ed. by Bernard Crick and Brian Richardson, trans. by Leslie J. Walker, (London, 1983), pp. 122-123, 335-336.

⁵⁰ James Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics*, ed. by J.G.A. Pocock, (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 16-17, 227-228.

⁵¹ William Paterson, 'A Proposal to Plant a Colony in Darien To Protect the Indians against Spain, and to Open the Trade of South America to All Nations', in *The Writings of William Paterson*, ed. by S. Bannister, 2 vols, (London, 1858), I, pp. 115-160, (pp. 153, 159).

For most Scots, Darien was a patriotic attempt to give Scotland economic strength and free it of any possibility of dependence on England. This patriotism was strengthened by obstructive English reactions. Scots saw in these another attempt to subordinate Scotland to English interests and pro-Darien pamphlets freely employ the language of Scottish independence. One pamphlet by 'Philo-Caledon' (attributed in the British Library catalogue to Fletcher) begins with an assertion of Scottish independence in which the names of Bruce, Balliol and Edward I are prominent.⁵² Another, by the Presbyterian Whig opponent of the 1707 Union George Ridpath, begins with a quotation from Buchanan's history: a patriotic speech by Wallace.⁵³

Pro-Darien pamphlets are favourable to the Darien Indians and hostile to the Spaniards who claim dominion over them. The Scottish choice of Darien for their scheme owed much to the account written by the Scottish pirate-surgeon Lionel Wafer, who was stranded there during his travels. Wafer's account describes the Darien Indians as a modest, martial and moral people who punish adultery with death.⁵⁴ This is also the description given by 'Philo-Caledon'.⁵⁵ Wafer's view of Spain is obvious from a story he relates about Indians who, Masada-like, kill themselves rather than surrender to Spanish besiegers.⁵⁶ 'Philo-Caledon' likewise takes a hostile view of Spanish imperialism. He dismisses the legitimacy of the fifteenth-century Papal grant on which Spain based its right to empire, and states firmly that 'the Dariens are the natural lords, the Spaniards tyrannical usurpers' in the isthmus. He stresses Spanish

⁵² 'Philo-Caledon', 'Dedication', in *A Defence of the Scots Settlement at Darien, with an Answer to the Spanish Memorial against it, And Arguments to prove that it is in the interests of England to join with the Scots, and protect it; To which is added a Description of the Country, and a particular account of the Scots Colony*, (Edinburgh, 1699).

⁵³ [George Ridpath], *Scotland's Grievances Relating to Darien*, ([n.p.], 1700), p. 1; Buchanan, *History*, I, p. 312-313.

⁵⁴ Lionel Wafer, *A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America*, ed. by L.E. Elliott Joyce, Hakluyt Society Publications, 2nd series, no. 73, (Oxford, 1934), pp. 84-86.

⁵⁵ 'Philo-Caledon', p. 72

⁵⁶ Wafer, p. 125.

brutality by repeating an anecdote from Bartolome de Las Casas, the sixteenth-century friar who championed the Indians against Spanish oppression. The anecdote recalls how the Arawak chief Hatuey, about to be burned by the Spaniards, refuses conversion because he has no wish to go to heaven; if all Christians are as brutal as the ones he has encountered, he has no wish to meet more.⁵⁷ This story is repeated by Robertson (who, however, changes 'Christians' to 'Spaniards'), duly footnoted to Las Casas (*A I*: 271). Walpole criticized Robertson for his supposedly critical treatment of Las Casas, and this treatment has been cited by modern authorities wishing to present Robertson as favourable to Spanish empire.⁵⁸ However, Robertson commends Las Casas's 'efforts in behalf of the oppressed Indians' and states that 'great praise is due to his humane activity' (*A I*: 327). Robertson clearly sees Las Casas as too partisan to be reliable, but this hardly makes him an apologist for Spanish behaviour. In a note to a description of Cortes's massacre of Indians at Panuco, Robertson states that 'In relating the oppressive and cruel proceedings of the conquerors of the New World, I have not followed B. de Las Casas as my guide. His account of them is manifestly exaggerated. It is from the testimony of Cortes himself [...] that I have taken my account of the punishment of the Panucans' (*A III*: 385). Far from softening Spanish atrocities, this dismissal of Las Casas has the opposite effect; the Spanish conquerors damn themselves. That Robertson was not enthusiastic about Las Casas may be due to Protestant suspicion. Robertson notes that he 'had ideas concerning the method of treating the Indians similar to those by which the Jesuits afterwards carried on their operations in another part of the same continent' (*A I*: 315). Robertson's views on the motives behind Jesuit benevolence are

⁵⁷ 'Philo-Caledon', pp. 7, 8, 13; Bartolome de Las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, ed. and trans. by Nigel Griffin and Anthony Pagden, (London, 1992), pp. 28-29.

⁵⁸ Walpole to Mason, 10/6/1777, in *Walpole's Correspondence*, XXVIII, p. 314; Brading, pp. 433-434; Bruce Lenman, ' " From Savage to Scot" via the French and the Spaniards: Principal Robertson's Spanish Sources', in *Expansion of Empire*, pp., 196-209 (p. 203).

set out in *Charles V.*⁵⁹ It is possible that he felt that Las Casas, like the Jesuits, had a sinister plan for clerical domination of the New World. Notwithstanding his dubiety about Las Casas's reliability, Robertson repeats the Hatuey anecdote without comment or citation of supporting authority, suggesting that he found it sufficiently important to set aside reservations about its origin.

Another pro-Darien pamphleteer was Robert Ferguson, 'the Plotter'. According to his contemporary, the Presbyterian historian Robert Wodrow, Ferguson was a Scottish Presbyterian minister who moved to England and apparently became an Independent.⁶⁰ He was involved in the Rye House Plot of 1683, escaped to Europe, returned with Monmouth, escaped again, and finally came back with William II and III in 1688. After 1688 he became a Jacobite for obscure reasons, which may be connected to Scottish patriotism. As his only full-length biography observes, he was always ready to defend Scotland against English criticism.⁶¹ This patriotism is strongly evident in his Darien pamphlet. He denies vehemently any suggestion that 'Scotland [...] is a Province Subordinate to any other Nation'. He also presents the Indians as 'the rightful owners' of Darien, and describes their conflicts with the Spaniards as patriotic struggles for liberty, 'Just and Lawful Wars, it being the highest of Nonsense to stile them Rebels who were never Subjects'. The Spaniards, in their New World conquests, had 'possessed themselves of their Dominions by Fraud, Violence and Usurpation'. Like 'Philo-Caledon', he rejects the Papal grant as a legitimate basis for Spanish dominion.⁶²

Presbyterianism also plays a role in Darien. Most of the Scots involved in Darien

⁵⁹ See above, p. 182.

⁶⁰ Robert Wodrow, *Analecta, or Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences, mostly relating to Scotch Ministers and Christians*, 4 vols, (Edinburgh, 1842-1843), II, 270-271.

⁶¹ James Ferguson, *Robert Ferguson the Plotter, or the Secret of the Rye-House Conspiracy and the Story of a strange Career*, (Edinburgh, 1887), pp. 3-4, 23, 333-334.

⁶² [Robert Ferguson], *A Just and Modest Vindication of the Scots Design for the having Established a Colony at Darien*, ([n.p.], 1699, pp. 30, 72-73, 74, 118.

were Presbyterian lowlanders, although highlanders made up about a third of the colonists.⁶³ One writer notes that the Darien Indians 'are very attentive at our Form of Worship; they did tell me they did not like the Spaniards' Religion [...] for that Religion cannot be good which is so cruel'.⁶⁴ Francis Borland, a Presbyterian minister who went to Darien, describes the final Spanish defeat of the Scots and their Indian allies. According to him, one of the conditions of surrender is that 'the Indians who have been friendly to us [...] shall not be molested on that account'. The Spanish commander indignantly responded that 'the Indians were the King of Spain's Subjects, and he knew best how to treat his own Subjects himself [...] he was angry with the Rev. Mr Shields who presented our petition, and gave him a short answer, of being too Officious'.⁶⁵ To the Scots, of course, the Indians were not Spanish subjects. The Presbyterians were clearly concerned about the fate of their allies. Alexander Shields, significantly, was one of the most die-hard Covenanters of the 1680's. His political treatise, *A Hind Let Loose*, is described by Kidd as the 'culmination of a canon of radical Covenanting political theory', including Rutherford's *Lex, Rex*, which was 'indebted to Buchanan' but which 'made even Buchananite resistance theory seem tame' (SSP: 54). Once again, there seems to be a link between the 'Scottish' outlook on religion and politics, and sympathy with the victims of conquest.

The Darien writers make no explicit comparisons of themselves to the Indians as patriots fighting foreign domination. This may have been due to the derisive tendency of the English to see Scots themselves as uncivilized. A satirical account of Darien

⁶³ John Prebble, *The Darien Disaster*, (London, 1970), p. 246.

⁶⁴ *A Letter Giving a Description of the Isthmus of Darien (Where the Scots Colonie is settled), From a Gentleman who lives there at present*, (Edinburgh, 1699), p. 11.

⁶⁵ [Francis Borland], *Memoirs of Darien, Giving a Short Description of that Country with an Account of the attempts of the Company of Scotland To Settle a Colonie in that Place, With a relation of some of the many Tragical Disasters which did attend that design; With some practical reflections upon the Whole, Written mostly in the year 1700, while the Author was in the American Regions*, (Glasgow, 1705), p. 69.

shows this, describing Scots and Indians exchanging children and drawing lessons in mutual assistance from the behaviour of monkeys.⁶⁶ It would have been unwise to provide more ammunition for such attacks. 'Philo-Caledon' suggests that Indian chiefs 'somewhat resemble our Heads of Clans in Scotland', which, considering the normal lowland view of highlanders would not seem complimentary.⁶⁷ However as 'Philo-Caledon' takes a favourable view of the Indians, the comparison with highlanders is plainly not meant in a derogatory way.

It could be suggested that the Darien writers only attacked Spanish empire and defended the Indians in order to justify taking over Darien themselves. As Pagden points out, the English also used arguments about liberating Indians from Spanish oppression.⁶⁸ The English in North America soon became almost as oppressive as the Spanish were further south. Had Darien succeeded, the Scots, like the English, might have moved from alliance to dispossession. On the other hand, the 'Scottish' tradition of defensive patriotism, with its associated suspicion of conquest, may have caused a different development from that in other colonial situations. The evidence that we have shows Scots firmly allying themselves with peoples who, like themselves, are threatened with foreign oppression. Pagden's belief that Darien writers wanted to convince Indians of 'the benefit of having a *British* colony to defend them against the tyrannical Spaniards' (my emphasis), completely ignores the role played by Scottish patriotism in Darien, and its implications. Scottish and English writings on empire are

⁶⁶ *The History of Caledonia, or the Scots Colony in Darien, in the West Indies, With an Account of the Manners of the Inhabitants and Riches of the Country, by a Gentleman lately Arriv'd*, (London, 1699), pp. 33-34, 51.

⁶⁷ 'Philo-Caledon', p. 79.

⁶⁸ Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France, c. 1500-c. 1800*, (New Haven and London, 1995), p. 88.

lumped together as 'British', as if the writers shared common views on empire.⁶⁹ That they did not is evident. A pro-Darien commentator calls himself 'Philo-Caledon'; a hostile writer, who describes 'Philo-Caledon's view of the Indians as 'a free people' as 'ridiculous' and the Indians themselves as 'barbarous', signs himself 'Philo-Britain'.⁷⁰ There is an obvious conflict between two different traditions of thought about 'imperial' matters.

This is emphasized by the continuing existence of anti-'imperial' and pro-Indian Scottish writing after the Union. Daniel Carey has shown that Scottish and Scots-Irish writers discovered noble 'savages' long before Rousseau without, like Rousseau, being committed to primitivism. Of the writers whom Carey discusses, examination shows that the ones most sympathetic to Indians are the Scots-Irish Presbyterians Francis Hutcheson and Charles Thomson. Hutcheson found admirable qualities in Indians.⁷¹ These include, significantly, patriotism, the 'Contempt of Death in defence of their Country'. Hutcheson also states that Europeans are in no position to criticize 'the wondrous Barbarity of the Indians' when they themselves are 'no strangers to the Massacre at Paris, the Irish Rebellion or the Journals of the Inquisition'.⁷² Furthermore, he insists that 'nothing has less foundation than that claim called the *right of conquest*'. Conquered peoples 'have still a right to retake whatever they have lost'.⁷³

Charles Thomson served as secretary to Delaware chiefs in political negotiations, publishing, in 1759, an account of these negotiations.⁷⁴ Thomson states the Indian view, that 'the abuses they have suffered from the English, particularly in being cheated and

⁶⁹ Pagden, *Lords*, p. 76.

⁷⁰ 'Philo-Britain', *The Defence of the Scots Settlement at Darien Answer'd, Paragraph by Paragraph*, (London, 1699), p. 10.

⁷¹ Daniel Carey, 'Reconsidering Rousseau: Sociability, Moral Sense and the American Indian from Hutcheson to Bartram', *British Journal of Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 21 (1998), 25-38 (pp. 25-26, 28-29).

⁷² Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, 3rd edn, (London, 1729), p. 206.

⁷³ Francis Hutcheson, *A System of Moral Philosophy*, 2 vols, (London, 1755), II, pp. 287, 289.

⁷⁴ Carey, p. 34.

defrauded of their Land, have at length induced them to become our Enemies'. As to 'the complaints they made of abuses received from the English [...] much Pains have been taken to represent them as groundless, and only lame excuses for their late Perfidiousness'. Because of such treatment, Britain, because of 'Avarice and Wickedness' is 'deprived of the Friendship and Alliance of those Nations who are capable of being our most useful Friends'.⁷⁵ The Delawares, as Carey points out, were grateful to Thomson and knew him as 'the one who speaks truth'.⁷⁶

2) Robertson's History: Spanish America

The 'Scottish' suspicion of conquest and sympathy with its victims is strongly present in Robertson, who possessed all the 'Scottish' characteristics found in varying mixtures in other Scots who took a suspicious view of empire. That this is unrecognized is due to the belief that Robertson abandoned 'Scottish' values, with its attached tendency to over-emphasize his 'stadial' or 'conjectural' writing. In *America* this means concentrating almost exclusively on Books IV and VII, which discuss the 'savage' Indians and the more advanced 'barbarian' Aztecs and Incas respectively.

'Stadial' history, very broadly, illustrates a theory of progress, tracing societal development through successive 'savage', 'barbarian', feudal-agrarian and commercial stages, each stage having distinctive socio-political features which result from the method of subsistence practiced in each stage. Smith, for example, defines the stages as successive Ages of Hunters, Shepherds, Agriculture and Commerce.⁷⁷ Each stage is necessarily an improvement on the previous one. Writers might differ as to the benefits

⁷⁵ [Charles Thomson], *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Alienation of the Delaware and Shawanese Indians from the British Interest And the Measures taken for recovering their Friendship*, (London, 1759), pp. 4,5.

⁷⁶ Carey, p. 34.

⁷⁷ Adam Smith, *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, ed. by R.L. Meek et al., (Indianapolis, 1982), pp. 14, 459.

of progress, but generally, the progressive conventions of 'stadial' history require that the 'savage' or 'barbarian' stages be inferior to the 'civilized' ones. By focussing on the 'stadial' portions of Robertson's work, authorities can see him judging Indians by these standards. O'Brien devotes half her discussion of *America* to 'stadial' history (NE: 156-161). She therefore has no trouble in seeing that Robertson regarded the Indians as both materially and morally backward. (NE: 159). According to Lenman, Robertson applies a 'rigidly progressive stadialism', and therefore finds Indians hopelessly inferior.⁷⁸ If Robertson finds Indians inferior, it is possible to suggest that he takes an offhand view of their sufferings at Spanish hands: Stewart Brown believes that his 'dismissive treatment of "savages" in Book IV served to diminish the crimes against them in Book III'.⁷⁹ This is similar to the view taken by Smitten who states that for Robertson, Spanish atrocities 'cannot be judged in isolation, but must be seen as part of a larger and [...] ultimately benevolent process'.⁸⁰ This is in line with Smitten's general view of Robertson as an advocate of empire. Both Brown and Smitten suggest that Robertson sees the growth of empire as the working out of the Providential scheme of history.⁸¹ Such views reflect a long tradition of seeing Robertson's view of Indians as a negative one, by examples selected from the 'stadial' sections of *America*.⁸²

⁷⁸ Lenman, 'Spanish Sources', p. 208.

⁷⁹ Stewart J. Brown, 'An Eighteenth-Century Historian on the Amerindians: Culture, Colonialism and Christianity in William Robertson's History of America', *Studies in World Christianity*, 2 (1996), 196-209 (p. 213).

⁸⁰ Jeffrey Smitten, 'Impartiality in Robertson's *History of America*', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 19 (1985), 56-77 (p. 65).

⁸¹ Smitten, 'Impartiality', pp. 70-71; Brown, 'Amerindians', p. 218.

⁸² As a representative selection: Henry Ward Church, 'Corneille de Pauw and the Controversy over his *Recherches Philosophiques*', *PMLA*, 51 (1936), 178-207 (pp. 191-192); Gilbert Chinard, 'Eighteenth-Century Theories on America as a Human Habitat', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 91 (1947), 27-57 (pp. 38-39); E. Adamson Hoebel, 'William Robertson: An Eighteenth-Century Anthropologist-Historian', *The American Anthropologist*, 62 (1960), 648-655 (p. 652); Roy Harvey Pearce, *The Savages of America: A Study of the Indians and the Idea of Civilization*, (Baltimore, 1965), pp. 87-90; R.F. Berkhofer Jr, *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*, (New York, 1978), pp. 48-49; P. J. Marshall and Glyndwr Williams, *The Great map of Mankind: British Perceptions of the World in the Age of Enlightenment*, (London, 1982), pp. 219-222; Brading, pp. 435-440; Phillipson, 'Providence', p. 68.

Moreover, if Robertson sees Indians as inferior, and their sufferings as therefore insignificant, it is possible to describe him, as Lenman does, 'defending the reputation of Spanish imperialism'.⁸³ Concentrating on the 'stadial' portions also lessens Robertson's 'Scottishness' because it enables authorities to place him in a European tradition regarding Indian inferiority associated with writers like Buffon, De Pauw and Raynal. Such writers, particularly Buffon, are used extensively in Robertson's 'stadial' sections. This aspect naturally appeals to O'Brien (*NE*: 158). Brading also stresses the resemblance of Robertson's views to those of Buffon and De Pauw.⁸⁴

Had Robertson written only 'stadial' history, such views would be indisputable. However, in the narrative Books, Robertson considers Indians by a very different standard than the conventions of 'stadial' history, and this standard seems to be the 'Scottish' one of hostility to conquest and support for resistance to it. Moreover, in the narrative Robertson is concerned with barbarism not as a 'stadial' division but as a moral condition, so that the true barbarians are not the Indians, but the Spaniards.

The difference between Robertson's views in the 'stadial' and narrative sections of his history could be explained by Hopfl's theory about Scottish historians in which facts described in 'stadial' history 'were deemed to be *typical*, whereas the sequences of narrative documentary history were *unique* or *particular*'. Unfortunately, in Robertson's case, the same objection that applied to Moore's position about Robertson's view of resistance can be made to Hopfl's theory.⁸⁵ Robertson's view of the Indians in the narrative is almost consistently positive, as against his view of the Europeans, so that he would have had to see history as consisting entirely of exceptions in order to fit Hopfl's

⁸³ Lenman, 'Spanish Sources', p. 208.

⁸⁴ Brading, p. 436.

⁸⁵ See above, pp. 122-123.

definition. More applicable is Hopfl's belief that 'conjectural' history is less concerned with the history of any particular society than with 'society' in general.⁸⁶ The different positions taken by Robertson in narrative and 'stadial' history make it possible to see that Books IV and VII are less descriptions of American Indians than of theoretical cases of 'savagery' and 'barbarism' using American examples interpreted according to established conventions. In other words, Books IV and VII show how Indians *ought* to be, according to the conventions of 'stadial' history, while the narrative shows how, by Robertson's 'Scottish' standards, they actually *do* behave. This seems confirmed by the fact that there is nothing original about Books IV and VII. Discussing the resemblance of Robertson to Buffon and company, O'Brien admits that 'Robertson was a populariser, rather than an originator, of such ideas' (NE: 158). *America* was a late contribution to 'stadial' history. Smith's public lectures in Edinburgh, which Robertson may have attended (NE: 112), were delivered long before *America* appeared, and the major works employing 'stadial' history—Ferguson's *Essay*, Millar's *Distinction of Ranks*, Kames's *Sketches of the History of Man*—likewise all pre-date *America*. The lack of originality in Robertson's 'stadial' work is noticed by Phillipson, who calls Book IV, 'pure Smith, or, more likely, Millar'.⁸⁷ Robertson's originality lay in his research for the narrative history. Robertson, as Lenman points out based his history firmly on Spanish sources at a time when most Anglophones relied on French writers.⁸⁸ He also compiled a questionnaire about Indians, which was sent to anyone who had contact with them, a novel approach in the eighteenth century. However, as Mark Duckworth shows, Robertson made more use of published sources than of the answers to his questionnaire, which Duckworth explains by saying that Robertson was not really

⁸⁶ H. M. Hopfl, 'From Savage to Scotsman: Conjectural History in the Scottish Enlightenment', *Journal of British Studies*, 17 (1978), 19–40 (pp. 23, 25).

⁸⁷ Phillipson, 'Providence', p. 64.

⁸⁸ Lenman, 'Spanish Sources', p. 198.

an original historian, and that his questionnaire was 'a tool of greater sophistication than he could use'.⁸⁹ Lenman, however, is probably closer to the truth when he states that Robertson's reluctance to use the answers to his questionnaire was due to the fact that they contradicted the conventions of 'stadial' history, which require a negative view of 'savages'.⁹⁰ Most of the questionnaire, which Duckworth reproduces in his article about it, is relevant only to 'stadial' history.⁹¹ Robertson, therefore, while using a novel method of research in connection with 'stadial' history, did not use it to draw any novel conclusions. The contrast between 'stadial' and narrative history in Robertson's *America*, and the lack of originality in the 'stadial' portions again suggest that these portions were, like the *Progress*, written to appeal to a specific readership whose approval was vital to Robertson's success. Robertson would have known that 'stadial' history was fashionable from the works of his fellow-Scots, and that writing resembling that of continental authorities would go down well with 'polite' Europe. The formula and conventions of 'stadial' history being established, and evidently approved by the 'polite', Robertson needed to do little more than follow them to ensure success. Contemporary periodicals reflect this. The *Annual Register* states that Books IV and VII 'will be considered by readers of a philosophical turn as the most valuable part of the work'.⁹² The *Gentleman's Magazine* found Book IV 'the most interesting part of the work'.⁹³ However, having observed the conventions of 'stadial' history in Books IV and VII, Robertson then apparently felt free to return to an older 'Scottish' position in the narrative, and to draw conclusions that clash with the values of 'stadial' history.

⁸⁹ Mark Duckworth, 'An Eighteenth-Century Questionnaire: William Robertson on the Indians', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 11 (1987), 36-49 (p. 43).

⁹⁰ Lenman, 'Spanish Sources', pp. 207-208.

⁹¹ Duckworth, pp. 46-48.

⁹² Review of *America*, *Annual Register*, 20 (1777), 214-219 (p. 218).

⁹³ Review of *America*, *Gentleman's Magazine*, 48 (1778), 25-26, 78-81 (p. 26).

Even a superficial examination of the narrative shows that the prevailing one-sided view of Robertson is problematic. Brown's suggestion that Robertson's description of Indians in Book IV lessens the impact of their sufferings in Book III does not seem supported by evidence, although the question depends somewhat on the view of the reader. In Book IV, Robertson points out that Indians are physically weak, being 'more remarkable for agility than strength' (A I: 61). Robertson sees 'this feebleness of constitution' as 'universal among the inhabitants of those regions of America which we are surveying' (A I: 61-62). Their lack of facial hair suggests 'a defect of vigour' and their small appetites 'a natural debility' (A I: 62). Nonetheless, when we turn to the narrative, it does not appear that Robertson sees the 'feebleness' of the Indians making their sufferings at Spanish hands less serious:

The Spaniards, without attending to those peculiarities in the constitution of the Americans, imposed tasks [...] so disproportioned to their strength that many sunk under the fatigue and ended their wretched days. Others, prompted by [...] despair, cut short their own lives with a violent hand (A I: 255).

Robertson seems to find that the weakness of the Indians makes the situation more deplorable, not less. The Indians do appear to be somewhat helpless victims, but this, as we shall see, is far from being Robertson's usual view. Moreover, as I shall also discuss, Robertson does not believe that Spaniards have any right to be in America, so that he would have been unlikely to approve even if the Spaniards were benevolent.

The idea that Robertson sees empire building as Providentially approved also needs qualification. Robertson appears reluctant to involve Providence in America. Providence is present in *Scotland* and *Charles V.*⁹⁴ It is also noticeable in the *early* portions of *America*, which describe discovery rather than conquest. The age of discovery is the time 'when Providence decreed that men were to pass the limits within

⁹⁴ See above, pp. 120-121, 168-170, 181, 200-201.

they had been so long confined' (A I: 54). When Columbus comes close to death, Robertson explains his survival by saying that 'Providence intervened to save a life reserved for other services' (A I: 145). Columbus, in Robertson's view, is a discoverer rather than a conqueror, and, unlike other Europeans in the American story, he is comparatively benevolent to the Indians, instructing his men 'to avoid giving offense to the natives by violence and exactions' (A I: 141). After Columbus, conquest begins, and Providence vanishes from Robertson's account. John Wesley objected to this: 'Was it not enough never to mention the Providence of God [...] without saying expressly, "The fortune of Cortes", or "*chance* did thus and thus"? So far as fortune governs the world, God has no place in it'.⁹⁵ Robertson's Spanish sources repeatedly assert Providential guidance. When marching conditions improve, Cortes says that 'it pleased God we should come down to level ground'; when he has a bright idea, he writes that 'Our Lord inspired me'.⁹⁶ Bernal Diaz de Castillo, who served in Cortes's Mexican expedition insists that 'our victories were the work of our Lord Jesus Christ'.⁹⁷ Robertson never suggests that Spanish actions are Providentially approved. In his published 1755 sermon, Robertson is already unwilling to allow Providential sanction for one aspect of empire. One of the sermon's points is that Christianity helped to abolish slavery (XA: cxiv-cxviii). However, Robertson knew that slavery flourished in America. A note is added to explain this:

The permission of slavery in our American colonies is a specious, not a real objection against the reasoning on this head [...] If avarice hath revived, in a degenerate world, an institution which Christianity had utterly abolished, this, like many other vices which prevail among Christians, must be charged upon the corruption of the human heart, not upon the religion which testifies against it (XA: cxviii).

⁹⁵ Wesley, *Works*, IV, p. 210.

⁹⁶ *Letters of Cortes to Charles V*, ed. and trans. by F.A. MacNutt, 2 vols, (New York and London, 1908), II, pp. 12, 19.

⁹⁷ Bernal Diaz de Castillo, *The Conquest of New Spain*, ed. and trans. by J.M. Cohen, (London, 1963), pp. 77.

The revival of slavery, identified as a symptom of empire by mention of America, clearly has no Providential sanction for Robertson. The absence of Providence from the later portions of *America* suggests that Robertson saw no Providential role in conquest either, or was at least reluctant to admit its part.

The best evidence for Robertson as an apologist for Spanish empire is the initial enthusiasm which *America* attracted in Spain. Brading ends his description of Robertson as defender of Spanish imperialism by saying that 'the Royal Academy of History in Madrid gladly incorporated him in their ranks and sought to publish a translation of his works in Madrid'.⁹⁸ Robertson's admission to the Academy is noted in the *Edinburgh Advertiser* in 1777. This newspaper, however, also notes that Robertson's work contains 'severe strictures upon the ecclesiastical, commercial, and civil policies of Spain, in the government of her colonies'.⁹⁹ This is important, because, *pace* the views of modern scholars, it shows that a contemporary newspaper did not see Robertson as an imperial apologist. That it is a *Scottish* newspaper is significant, because it again suggests that Scots readers were more attuned to anti-imperial views. It is in the English *Gentleman's Magazine*, that Robertson is attacked for being favourable to Cortes, and unenthusiastic about Las Casas. The writer's motive is Scotophobia and aggressive English patriotism, not hostility to empire; he also attacks Ferguson, Smith, and Kames, and criticizes Lord Bute for giving away portions of empire at the Peace of Paris.¹⁰⁰

Brading does not mention the fate of the proposed Spanish translation of *America*. Correspondence concerning Robertson and Spain does not show

⁹⁸ Brading, pp. 432-441, 441.

⁹⁹ Article on Robertson's Admission to the Royal Academy in Madrid, *Edinburgh Advertiser*, no. 1441 (17/10/1777-21/10/1777), 260.

¹⁰⁰ 'L.L', 'To the Rev. Dr Robertson, on his late Publication of the History of America', *Gentleman's Magazine*, 48 (1778), 11-14 (pp. 13-14); 'To the Rev. Dr Robertson on the Publication of the Second Volume of his History of America', *Gentleman's Magazine*, 48 (1778), 72-73 (pp. 72, 73).

wholehearted Spanish approval. Even while Robertson was still researching the work, there were problems. Robertson's research assistants in Spain were the British ambassador Lord Grantham and his chaplain Robert Waddilove. Their enquiries aroused official suspicion. Robertson is already aware of this in 1772, when he mentions 'the mysterious secrecy the Spaniards affect with regard to everything that concerns the West Indies'.¹⁰¹ Grantham, in a letter to Robertson, confirms Spanish suspicion: 'It is [...] difficult to persuade anyone that Enquiries of the kind which you wished to be made, are directed to general and liberal Purposes [...] and that they may be literary, not Political Pursuits'.¹⁰² It is, of course, unsurprising that Spanish officialdom should look askance at enquiries made about their colonial possessions by the ambassador of a country with which it had so often been at war. Spain was soon to take the American side in the War of Independence, although this cannot be seen as the reason for Spanish suspicion of Robertson's work, which was clearly operating before the war began.

When *America* appeared, it attracted the favour of Pedro Rodriguez de Campomanes, President of the Academy to which Robertson was admitted. Robertson, in a letter to Grantham about his admission, does say that 'I did somewhat merit at the hands of the Spaniards' because 'an apology for their conduct by a foreigner will be of more benefit to them than if it had come from a native Spaniard'.¹⁰³ However, that Robertson did *not* feel that his work was a whitewash of Spanish conduct is evident from his fear that the Spaniards will 'mutilate and perhaps mistake what I have written in their translation'.¹⁰⁴ There was no reason for Robertson to fear this if he really thought his work a defense of Spanish behaviour.

¹⁰¹ Robertson to Grantham, 21/2/1772, in Jeremy Black, 'Researches', p. 254.

¹⁰² Grantham to Robertson, 31/10/1776, *R-McD*, MS 3942, f. 283, NLS.

¹⁰³ Robertson to Grantham, 31/1/1778, in Jeremy Black, 'Researches', p. 259.

¹⁰⁴ Robertson to Grantham, 31/1/1778, in Jeremy Black, 'Researches', p. 259.

Robertson's fears were justified, judging by a letter from Waddilove stating that 'I should not be surprised to find it asserted in some note or preface that they have authority to say you have renounced your errors'. The translators, says Waddilove are certain to censor themselves, because 'they must not risque the Books being prohibited or burnt. I have already mentioned to you the renewed Power of a certain Court, and some recent examples of it'. This allusion to the Inquisition is followed by a warning that Robertson's friend Campomanes is less influential than he thinks, because the clergy are against him.¹⁰⁵ King Charles III authorized the translation for publication in January 1778, but, as Charles Ronan discusses, a clerical party made him change his mind.¹⁰⁶ Later in 1778, Waddilove gloomily predicts that the translation 'will never be published'.¹⁰⁷ A letter to Robertson from Dames Barrington informs him in 1780 of news from Spain: 'your excellent History of America had been translated [...] but hath been suppressed'.¹⁰⁸ As Humphreys points out, a decree prohibiting the importation of Robertson's work into the Spanish overseas possessions had already been issued in December 1778.¹⁰⁹ The Spanish government plainly found Robertson a pretty poor 'spokesman for empire'.

A strong argument against the view of Robertson as a defender of Spanish empire is the fact that, like the Darien writers, he ridicules the basis for Spanish empire, the Papal grant of 1493. A chief point used by those who see Robertson as an apologist for Spanish imperialism is his reliance on the history of Antonio de Herrera (1549-1625).¹¹⁰ Herrera, as Brading points out, held the position of 'chief historiographical chronicler of

¹⁰⁵ Robert Waddilove to Robertson, 3/11/1777, *R-McD*, MS 3943, ff. 42, 43, NLS.

¹⁰⁶ Charles E. Ronan, 'Antonio de Alcedo: His Collaborators and his Letters to William Robertson', *The Americas*, 34 (1977-1978), 490-501 (p. 498).

¹⁰⁷ Waddilove to Robertson, 31/8/1778, *R-McD*, MS 3943, f. 76, NLS.

¹⁰⁸ Dames Barrington to Robertson, 1/1/1780, *R-McD*, MS 3943, f. 111, NLS.

¹⁰⁹ R.A. Humphreys, *William Robertson and his History of America: A Lecture delivered at Canning House on 11 June 1954*, (London, 1954), p. 27.

¹¹⁰ Brading, pp. 433-434, 439-440; Lenman, 'Spanish Sources', p. 203.

the Indies', and 'took advantage of his own impressive talents to advance the cause of the Spanish Crown' and 'justify the empire'.¹¹¹ If Robertson's views agreed with those of this court historian, then a powerful case could be advanced for the 'apologist' view. Robertson's reliance on Herrera seems primarily based on the comprehensiveness of Herrera's history, which provides 'the fullest and most accurate information' (A II: 414). This does not, however, imply agreement with Herrera's ideological position. The question of the Papal grant is an example. Pagden points out that the Papal grant of America to the Castilian crown was regarded by that crown as a significant justification for their American empire, and, as both he and Brading show, Herrera stressed the importance of that grant.¹¹² Herrera takes the grant as full justification for Spanish possession of America:

This Donation differ'd very much from what is usually granted to other Princes, because [...] their Catholic majesties had acquired a just Title by Temporal Power for the promulgation of the Gospel, and had at their own Court and with their Subjects discover'd those remote Parts [...] and found them inhabited by barbarous Nations, ignorant of the Christian Faith and having Gold and aromatick Product, and by reason of the vast Extent of the said Lands, it was necessary to give their Catholick Majesties sovereign Power [...] without which the Gospel could not have been preach'd, nor politic Government introduc'd.¹¹³

Herrera not only sees the Papal grant as legitimate, but also plainly sees that the 'barbarousness' of Indians justifies Spanish presence, to bring 'politic Government'. Robertson, however, sees the grant as a piece of Papal arrogance and self-interest. Pope Alexander VI, 'a Pontiff infamous for every crime' needs the help of King Ferdinand 'to facilitate the execution of his ambitious schemes in favour of his own family'

¹¹¹ Brading, pp. 204, 205, 207.

¹¹² Pagden, *Lords*, pp. 48-49; Brading, pp. 207, 208.

¹¹³ Antonio de Herrera, *General History of the Vast Continents and Islands of America, Commonly called the West Indies, from the First discovery thereof: with the Best Accounts the People could Give of their Antiquities, Collected from the Original Relations sent to the King of Spain*, ed. and trans. by John Stevens, 2nd edn, 6 vols, (London, 1743), I, p. 145.

(A I: 155). Because of this, he grants Spain the world. Robertson's description emphasizes the grant's preposterousness :

By an act of liberality which cost him nothing, and that served to establish the jurisdiction and pretensions of the Papal see, he granted in full right to Ferdinand and Isabella all the countries [...] which they had discovered, or should discover; and [...] conferred on the crown of Castile vast regions, to the possession of which he was so far from having any title that he was unacquainted with their situation, and ignorant even of their very existence (A I: 155-156).

For Robertson, the Papal grant is Popish nonsense. If the Pope has no right to give America away, it follows that Spain has no title to occupy it. Robertson confirms this by his treatment of the *requerimiento*, the formal demand made by Spaniards encountering new Indians to submit to Spanish monarchy and Church. As Brading points out, it was grounded on the Papal grant and was 'a cynical piece of legal gibberish' enabling Spaniards to treat Indians who did not agree to it as rebels.¹¹⁴ Robertson, whom Brading attacks as the defender of Spain, also takes this view. To him, the *requerimiento* is a sleazy attempt by Spaniards 'to give their title to these countries some appearance of validity' than which 'there is not in the history of mankind any thing more singular or extravagant' (A I: 264). Robertson stresses that the *requerimiento* is 'utterly incomprehensible' to the Indians; nonetheless, 'if the natives refused to comply', the Spaniards 'were authorized to attack them with fire and sword' and 'to reduce them [...] to servitude' (A I: 264-265). Robertson emphasizes the absurdity of the proclamation by describing Indian reaction to it in terms of patriotic resistance:

As they did not conceive how a foreign priest, of whom they had never heard, could have any right to dispose of their country, or how an unknown prince should claim jurisdiction over them as his subjects—they fiercely opposed the new invaders of their territories (A I: 265).

Robertson quotes the full text of the *requerimiento* in a note, and states that it 'served as a model to the Spaniards in all their subsequent conquests in America'

¹¹⁴ Brading, p. 81.

(*A* I: 369-372, 369). As Robertson plainly does not see either the *requerimiento* or the Papal grant as valid, it is obvious that, for him, Spanish domination of America has no legitimacy. It is hard to see how Robertson could be a defender of Spanish empire when he attacks the integrity of its foundations.

The *requerimiento*, by making all recalcitrant Indians 'rebels', exemplifies the 'imperial' contempt which the Spaniards feel for the Indians because of their supposed inferiority. It is in *America* that Robertson sees this 'imperial' attitude, as having its direst consequences:

They conceived the Americans to be animals of an inferior nature who were not entitled to the rights and privileges of men. In peace, they subjected them to servitude. In war, they paid no regard to those laws which, by a tacit convention between contending nations, regulates hostility and set some bounds to its rage. They considered them not as men fighting for their liberty, but as slaves who had revolted against their masters (*A* I: 246).

It is, ironically, the Spaniards' sense of their own superiority to Indian 'savages' that makes them savage towards the Indians. When Velasquez burns Hatuey alive, he acts 'according to the barbarous maxims of the Spaniards', so that 'he considered him as a slave who had taken arms against his master' (*A* I: 271). This is where a major contrast between narrative and 'stadial' history occurs. The Indians in Books IV and VII are conventionally 'savage'. According to Harold Briggs, Robertson sees them as 'hard and brutal'.¹¹⁵ In Book IV, Robertson describes Indians as characterized by a 'hard unfeeling temper' (*A* II: 225). They torture prisoners to death, and, although Robertson stresses that 'human flesh was never used as common food' he also says that prisoners are often eaten due to the 'rancour of revenge' (*A* II: 159-162, 162). The more advanced Mexicans in Book VII are no better, making war in order to capture prisoners for human sacrifice (*A* III: 304). Robertson states that, with civilization, 'the fierceness of war

¹¹⁵ Harold E. Briggs, 'Keats, Robertson and *That Most Hateful Land*', *PMLA*, 59 (1944), 184-199 (p. 198).

abates, and even while engaged in hostility, men remember what they owe to one another'; however, among the Mexicans, 'war was carried out with so much of its original barbarity, that we cannot but suspect their degree of civilization to have been very imperfect' (*A* III: 304, 305).

Turning to the narrative, however, we find that the Indians do not behave in the bloodthirsty manner that the 'stadial' portions suggest. Robertson's Spanish sources dwell ghoulishly on the Indians' 'savage' features. Diaz de Castillo describes cages of people kept and fattened for consumption, and Herrera shows Peruvians sacrificing children by live burial.¹¹⁶ Apart from a brief description of the sacrifice of some Spanish prisoners, Robertson is not interested in such stories (*A* II: 63-64). Even in Book VII, he undermines Mexican ferocity in a note: 'the exaggeration of the Spanish historians with respect to the number of human victims sacrificed in Mexico, appears to be very great' (*A* III: 420). In Book IV, he defuses the horror of *Indian* cannibalism by describing starving *Spaniards* who eat dead companions, which 'appeared so shocking to the natives [...] that it filled them with horror and indignation against the Spaniards' (*A* II: 397). Significantly, in the 'stadial' portions, such remarks are made in notes, not the actual text, which again suggests a reluctance, when writing 'stadial' history, to issue open challenges to its conventions. In narrative, Robertson has no such reservations, describing how Spanish sailors, running out of food, 'proposed to feast upon the Indian prisoners they were carrying' (*A* I: 181). Only Columbus's intervention prevents this; significantly, Columbus argues 'that they [i.e., the Indians] were human beings' (*A* I: 181). Columbus, for Robertson, does not show the 'imperial' contempt for the 'inferior' which is characteristic of most Europeans.

Such stories reverse the assumptions of 'stadial' history. 'Savages' are horrified

¹¹⁶ Diaz de Castillo, pp. 183, 203; Herrera, IV, p. 347.

by the cannibalism of the 'civilized; Spaniards suggest eating Indians. Europeans cannot take their 'civilization' for granted, and ironically this emerges most clearly in an 'imperial' situation when Europeans are confronted by supposed 'savages' or 'barbarians'. According to Brown, Robertson sees Indians as 'brutish, cruel and treacherous, inhabiting a Hobbesian world'.¹¹⁷ This may be true of the 'stadial' portions, but in the narrative, Hobbesian traits are primarily found in Spaniards, and variations on the word 'barbarian' are used to describe Spanish behaviour. Ovando massacres the tribe of Anacoana, and Robertson states that 'the mean perfidy with which he executed the scheme equalled his barbarity in forming it' (A I: 248-249). Diego Ocampo, subduing Cumana, 'executed his commission in that province with [...] barbarous rage' (A I: 325). Cortes's Panuco massacre is 'shocking barbarity' (A III: 89). Robertson's description of the Spaniards as 'rapacious adventurers' who 'plundered without distinction' recalls his description of German barbarians in the *Progress*, who 'ravaged and destroyed all around them' (A I: 288, C I: 11). By 'stadial' reckoning, a preference for violence is a typically barbarian characteristic; Ferguson states that barbarians 'bring every contest to the decision of the sword'.¹¹⁸ In Robertson's narrative, however, it is not Indian 'barbarians' who do this. It is Pizarro who is shown 'disdaining to employ any means of reducing the natives but by force' (A III: 121-122). Alvarado's massacre at Tenochtitlan is the action of one who 'knew no method of supporting his authority but by force' (A III: 16). In Book VII, Robertson comments on barbarous Mexican warfare, but in Book V, it is the Spaniards who 'violated every right that should be held sacred between hostile nations' (A III: 89).

Robertson's view of Spanish actions clashes with that of the Spanish sources with whom he is held to agree. Robertson describes Cortes's mutilation of fifty

¹¹⁷ Brown, 'Amerindians', p. 212.

¹¹⁸ Adam Ferguson, *Essay*, p. 98.

Tlascalans as an action so 'barbarous' that it embarrasses Spanish historians (*A II*: 420). Herrera states that Cortes only mutilated seven of the Tlascalans, and Diaz de Castillo makes the figure seventeen, but Robertson chooses the worst account of all, which is Cortes's own, stating that all fifty Tlascalans had their hands amputated (*A II*: 300).¹¹⁹ Furthermore, the Spanish sources insist that the Tlascalans were spies, which justifies their punishment.¹²⁰ Robertson, however, states that 'it seems improbable that so great a number as fifty should be employed as spies' (*A II*: 420). Again, Herrera sees Cortes's massacre at Cholula as a pre-emptive strike; the Cholulans had been planning to destroy Cortes and his men, on orders from Montezuma.¹²¹ Robertson casts doubt on this theory, saying that 'Spaniards who served in America had such contempt for the natives, and thought them so little entitled to the common rights of men, that Cortes might hold the Cholulans guilty upon slight and imperfect evidence' (*A II*: 422). Again, 'imperial' contempt is responsible for atrocity. Such a view seems to contradict Brading's assertion that 'Robertson exculpated him [i.e., Cortes] from any responsibility for the massacre at Cholula'.¹²²

If Robertson's Spaniards are barbarians engaged in an illegitimate activity, his Indians—in the narrative—are positively noble, showing all the patriotism and 'public spirited' concern for liberty which is so important to the 'Scottish' tradition. O'Brien suggests that Robertson, in describing the Indians, expresses a 'civic moralist distaste for what he perceives to be an inactive society' in which he disagrees with Ferguson (*NE*: 159). This is a one-sided view based on Book IV. Ferguson does indeed find

¹¹⁹ Herrera, II, p. 266; Diaz de Castillo, p. 163; Cortes, I, p. 204.

¹²⁰ Herrera, II, p. 266; Diaz, p. 163; Cortes, I, p. 204.

¹²¹ Herrera, II, pp. 312-315.

¹²² Brading, p. 433.

'public spirit' in Indians, which is implied in his view that Lycurgus could have created a Sparta with them.¹²³ In the narrative, Robertson, unnoticed by O'Brien, clearly agrees with him. In fact, it is by the very 'civic moralist' standards by which O'Brien sees him judging Indians as inferior in Book IV, that he finds them admirable in the narrative sections. The Tlascalans have 'such detestation of servitude that they refused to stoop to a foreign yoke', and their resistance to the Spaniards has 'a degree of valour and perseverance to which the Spaniards had seen nothing parallel in the New World' (*A* II: 293, 295). The Aztecs are capable of heroic self-sacrifice. Robertson describes 'two young Mexicans of high rank' who, during the fighting at Tenochtitlan, 'resolved to sacrifice their lives in order to cut off the author of all the calamities which desolated their country' (*A* III: 25). They grab Cortes and try to run him off a building. Cortes breaks free, and 'the gallant youths perished in this generous though unsuccessful attempt to save their country' (*A* III: 25). Gilbert Stuart, at this time still an admirer of Robertson, was struck by this passage: 'Nothing in the history of the ancient republics is more glorious than the unsuccessful attempt of these two heroes and patriots. Actions of this kind redeem the character of America'.¹²⁴ Stuart, describing Robertson's narrative history, finds his description of Indian actions an admiring one. Once again, it is significant that Stuart was a patriotic Scot and therefore apparently more sensitive to the patriotic tradition which permeates the narrative of *America*.

Robertson's position is particularly clear regarding Indian leaders. Montezuma he despises. The measures he takes against the Spaniards are only 'feeble and temporizing', and, in Spanish captivity, he 'is so obsequious as to comply' with Cortes's wish that he swear public allegiance to Charles V (*A* II: 269, 334). Montezuma,

¹²³ Adam Ferguson, *Essay*, p. 94.

¹²⁴ [Gilbert Stuart], 'Review of *America*', *Monthly Review*, 56 (Jan-Jun 1777), 449-457; 57 (Jul-Dec 1777), 43-59, 120-140 (p. 132).

to Robertson is 'the instrument of his own disgrace and the slavery of his people' (A III: 22). Robertson's disapproval of Montezuma is similar to his view of Scotland's quisling King John Balliol, who is also called 'obsequious' by Robertson (S I: 218). Like Montezuma, he is the instrument of national subordination. By making him king, Edward I 'placed a creature of his own upon the throne of Scotland, and compelled the nobles to renounce the ancient liberties and independence of their country' (S I: 218). In the same spirit, Robertson admires Guatimozin, the last free ruler of Mexico, and a patriotic foe of the Spanish invaders. In the final battle, Guatimozin 'continued to defend his capital with obstinate resolution, and disputed every inch of ground' (A III: 67). Even when defeat is certain, he refuses to surrender, 'disdaining the idea of submitting to the oppressors of his country' (A III: 68). Captured and brought before Cortes, he shows 'neither the sullen fierceness of a barbarian, nor the dejection of a suppliant' (A III: 70). He delivers a noble speech:

'I have done', said he, addressing himself to the Spanish general, 'what became a monarch. I have defended my people to the last extremity. Nothing now remains but to die. Take this dagger', laying his hand on one which Cortes wore, 'plant it in my breast and put an end to a life which can no longer be of use' (A III: 71).

This is copied from the Spanish sources, although they all state that Cortes made a courteous reply, expressing admiration for Guatimozin's bravery.¹²⁵ Robertson does not mention Cortes's reaction; the next time the two men are shown together, Cortes is torturing Guatimozin to find out where his gold is. Guatimozin bears 'whatever the refined cruelty of his tormentors could inflict, with [...] invincible fortitude' (A III: 73). When one of his councillors, also being tortured, begs to be allowed to reveal the required information, 'the high spirited prince [...] checked his weakness by asking, "Am I now reposing upon a bed of flowers?"' (A III: 73). The result of this display is

¹²⁵ Diaz de Castillo, pp. 403-404; Herrera, III, p. 182.

that 'Cortes, ashamed of a scene so horrid, rescued the royal victim from the hands of his torturers' (A III: 73). The 'civilized' Cortes, in short, is shamed by the heroic conduct of a 'barbarian'.

The barbarism of the conquerors is emphasized by Robertson's view that Spanish conquest is an illegitimate enterprise, which Indians are fully justified in resisting. When Qualpopoca, a Mexican general who kills some Spaniards, is put on trial by them, with his officers, Robertson is highly critical: 'They were formally tried by a Spanish court-martial; and though they had acted no other part than what became loyal subjects and brave men [...] in opposing the invaders of their country, they were condemned to be burned alive' (A II: 328). Robertson notes indignantly that 'to inflict a capital punishment on men whose conduct intitles them to esteem appears an act of barbarous cruelty' (A II: 330). Like John Frederick in *Charles V*, Qualpopoca is illegally tried by foreigners.¹²⁶

That the Spaniards believe that they have a right to subjugate the natives Robertson regards as no excuse for their actions. The Spaniards, after capturing Guatimozin 'supposed that the King of Castile entered on possession of all the rights of the captive monarch, and affected to consider every effort of the Mexicans to assert their own independence as rebellion of vassals against their sovereign, or the mutiny of slaves against their master' (A III: 88). Such beliefs Robertson calls 'ill-founded maxims'—plainly invalid (A III: 88).

The greatest confrontation between barbarian Spaniard and noble Indian occurs in Robertson's account of the judicial murder of the Inca Atahualpa by Pizarro. Robertson sees this as 'the most criminal and atrocious [action] that stains the Spanish name amidst all the deeds of violence in carrying on the conquests of the New World'

¹²⁶ See above, pp. 195-196.

(A III: 147). Pizarro holds Atahualpa a prisoner while a ransom is delivered, on the understanding that Atahualpa will be freed when it is paid. When the ransom is in, the Inca asks the Spaniards to 'fulfill their promise of setting him at liberty', but instead, Pizarro decides to have him killed (A III: 147). Pizarro possesses in full measure the 'imperial' contempt for 'inferior' peoples, and therefore does not feel that he needs to keep his word to a supposed barbarian. While in America, Pizarro has 'imbibed those [...] maxims of his fellow soldiers, which led them to consider its inhabitants as an inferior race, neither worthy of the name nor entitled to the rights of men' (A III: 147). His 'compact with Atahualpa [...] had no other object than to amuse his captive with such a prospect of recovering his liberty as might induce him to lend all the weight of his authority towards collecting the wealth of his kingdom' (A III: 147). Having achieved this, Pizarro 'no longer regarded his plighted faith' and 'secretly resolved to bereave him of life' (A III: 147).

Robertson's view differs significantly from those of his Spanish sources. Augustin de Zarate, a Spanish official who served in Peru, suggests that Pizarro's decision was the result of a plot by a malevolent interpreter called Philipillo, who stirs up rumours that Peruvian armies are secretly gathering to free Atahualpa.¹²⁷ Herrera also states that sinister plans were afoot to free the Inca by force, and justifies Atahualpa's death on the grounds of political expediency. In Herrera's view, it was essential to 'fix the Dominion of the Crown of Spain over [...] those spacious lands', and to achieve this, Pizarro 'concluded it was [...] essential to overturn the Indian monarchy, which could not be done without the death of Atahualpa, and that he looked on as just, because it was advantageous'.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Augustin de Zarate, *The Discovery and Conquest of Peru*, ed. and trans. by J.M. Cohen, (London, 1968), p. 133.

¹²⁸ Herrera, IV, 271, 274.

Robertson mentions the plots of Philipillo (*A* III: 149), but, as he does not believe in the necessity of Spanish dominion, he does not, like Herrera, justify the Inca's death on pragmatic grounds. The only practical reason he gives for Pizarro's decision is simply that Pizarro, who despises the Inca, finds Atahualpa a nuisance: 'Pizarro felt him as an encumbrance, from which he wished to be delivered' (*A* III: 147). Robertson also repeats an anecdote found in the account of El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, which throws the contrast between the barbaric Spaniard and his victim into sharp relief.¹²⁹ The position of Garcilaso, the son of a conquistador and an Inca princess, was analogous to Robertson's own, in that he had to function in conflicting contexts. As Brading points out, Garcilaso writes favourably of the Pizarro brothers and seems loyal to Spain, while at the same time discreetly defending his mother's people.¹³⁰ Because Garcilaso defends the Incas, Brading and Lenman insist that Robertson denigrates his work.¹³¹ Robertson does state that Garcilaso lacks the 'capacity of distinguishing what is fabulous, what is probable, and what is true', but, at the same time, he values Garcilaso because 'his knowledge of the Peruvian language has enabled him to correct some errors of the Spanish writers' (*A* III: 391). One such error is that the Incas practiced human sacrifice; Robertson accepts Garcilaso's denial of this (*A* III: 422). In other words, Robertson, the supposed defender of Spanish empire, does not accept negative Spanish accounts of Inca barbarism.

The story Robertson takes from Garcilaso describes how the captive Atahualpa becomes interested in the Spaniards: 'Among all European arts, what he admired most was that of reading and writing; and he long deliberated with himself whether he should regard it as a natural or acquired talent' (*A* III: 150). In order to find out, he asks a

¹²⁹ El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas and General History of Peru*, ed. and trans., by Harold V. Livermore, 2 vols, (Austin and London, 1966), II, pp. 714-715.

¹³⁰ Brading, pp. 266-268.

¹³¹ Brading, p. 440; Lenman, 'Spanish Sources', p. 203.

Spaniard to write the name of God on his thumbnail, and asks others what it says; they all give the same answer. He then asks the illiterate Pizarro, who 'blushed, and [...] was obliged to acknowledge his ignorance' (A III: 150). Pizarro's illiteracy shows the Inca that Pizarro is 'a mean person, less instructed than his own soldiers' (A III: 150-151). Atahualpa offends Pizarro by this discovery which 'not only mortified the pride of Pizarro but excited such resentment in his breast, as added force to [...] the other considerations which prompted him to put the Inca to death' (A III: 151). Atahualpa, pondering the question of innate and acquired knowledge and then setting out to solve the matter by experiment, is certainly not, according to 'stadial' reckoning, behaving like a barbarian. According to Ferguson, 'the barbarian spends every moment of relaxation in the indulgence of sloth'.¹³² Gibbon, who was influenced by Scottish 'stadial' and 'conjectural' history—he cites Robertson's *Progress* in his chapter on Germans—asserts that barbarians, when not fighting, spend their time in a state of physical and mental torpor.¹³³ Atahualpa's active and enquiring mind does not fit into such definitions. What *is* barbaric is Pizarro's violent reaction, which closely fits Ferguson's assertion that a barbarian, 'when provoked [...] recurs to the sword, as the ultimate means of decision'.¹³⁴

Atahualpa is tried for idolatry, adultery and wasting the royal treasure, which, according to the Spaniards 'now belonged of right to the conquerors' (A III: 152). These charges are 'so absurd, that the effrontery of Pizarro in making them the foundation of a serious procedure, is not less surprising than his injustice' (A III: 152). On this flimsy base, a Spanish court presumes 'to try the sovereign of a great empire, over whom it had no jurisdiction' (A III: 152). The emphasis on the illegality of the trial reveals

¹³² Adam Ferguson, *Essay*, p. 101.

¹³³ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, I, pp. 237, 239.

¹³⁴ Adam Ferguson, *Essay*, p. 121.

Robertson's 'Scottish' concern with independence and the illegitimacy of foreign dominion. The obvious parallel is the trial of Mary, which Robertson also insists is illegitimate and founded on flimsy evidence.¹³⁵ The Spanish writers, who believe that Spain does have jurisdiction over America, naturally do not see the trial as illegal. Even Garcilaso only states that the conquistadors themselves had no right to try Atahualpa; the matter should have been referred to Charles V in Spain.¹³⁶ Robertson's view is emphasized when he shows Spaniards objecting to Atahualpa's trial and execution, which they describe as 'disgraceful to their country, as repugnant to every maxim of equity, as a violation of public faith, and an usurpation of jurisdiction over an independent monarch, to which they had no title' (A III: 154). Such language again stresses illegality; Robertson's condemnation of Atahualpa's judicial murder is not based on purely humanitarian grounds, but on political issues of national sovereignty.

Robertson's views seem, at first, to place him in the 'cosmopolitan' camp. O'Brien suggests that Robertson's attitude resembles 'Voltaire's conflation of barbarism as a developmental stage with barbarism as a form of moral inferiority' (NE: 160). In Robertson's account, however, the two are not conflated. The paradox of Spanish colonial activity is that moral behaviour is not linked to material development. In material terms, the Spaniards are more advanced than the Indians, but they are morally inferior. It could be argued that the methods used by the Spaniards to acquire wealth in the New World make them, in a sense, barbarians in a 'stadial' way, because, like barbarians, they acquire wealth by plunder. In Robertson's view, Spanish greed causes many of their 'barbarous' actions. The torture of Guatimozin is an example, and the massacre of Mexicans at Tenochtitlan is partly due to the Spaniards being 'allured [...] by the rich ornaments they wore' (A III: 16). In fact, if *Charles V* is an extended

¹³⁵ See above, pp. 150-151.

¹³⁶ Garcilaso, II, p. 714.

sermon about pride, *America* is one about avarice. European expansion is motivated by greed: 'Men, animated with the certain prospect of gain, pursued discovery with greater eagerness than when they were excited only by curiosity and hope' (A I: 72). Robertson uses Spanish avarice to emphasize the contrast between Spanish barbarism and Indian behaviour in an anecdote concerning two Spaniards who, in a quarrel about gold were 'at the point of proceeding to acts of violence' (A I: 275). An Indian chief who is present 'astonished at the high value which they set upon a thing of which he did not discern the use' rebukes them:

'Why do you quarrel (said he) about such a trifle? If you are so passionately fond of gold, as to abandon your own country, and to disturb the tranquility of distant nations [...] I will conduct you to a region where the metal which seems to be the chief object of your desire is so common that the meanest utensils are made out of it (A I: 275).

Avarice makes the Spaniards behave like barbarians, resorting to the sword to solve differences. For this they are rebuked by a supposed savage, who, lacking avarice, is morally their superior. Like the Portuguese in Buchanan's poem, the Spaniards disturb the peace, the 'tranquility of distant nations' which have done them no harm, because of greed.¹³⁷ The drive to empire is a destructive and immoral force. Robertson's story is taken from Herrera, but the Spanish writer does not mention violence; Robertson adjusts the story to make the moral point more clear.¹³⁸

Robertson's noble Indians invite comparisons with Rousseau, but Rousseau's invocation of savage nobility is part of a critique of civilization as a whole. For Rousseau, civilization itself means vice, corruption and inequality, which begin with the establishment of private property. The 'tranquility and liberty' of the savage condition is preferable to the condition of civilized man.¹³⁹ Robertson has no quarrel with

¹³⁷ See above, pp. 210-211..

¹³⁸ Herrera, II, p. 7.

¹³⁹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Discourse on the Origin of Inequality', in *Basic Political Writings*, ed. by Peter Gay, trans. by Donald A. Cress, (Indianapolis and Cambridge, 1987), pp. 25-109, (pp. 60-64, 80).

civilization *per se*. His use of Indian nobility and Spanish barbarism is designed to illustrate his 'Scottish' concerns with the illegitimacy of conquest and the importance of national independence. Had the Spaniards stayed at home, they would not be barbarians. It is in the pursuit of the evil goal of conquest that they become barbaric, moved by greed and the 'imperial' contempt for the supposedly 'inferior'. However, even if 'imperial' activity turns the Spaniards into barbarians, they are not 'barbaric' to start with. 'Stadially' speaking, sixteenth-century Spaniards are in the third, agrarian, stage, so there can be no suggestion of the Voltairean conflation of material and moral development suggested by O'Brien.

French writers are, however, critical of Spanish imperialism. Montesquieu specifically calls the Spaniards 'barbarians' in discussing America and he condemns the trial of Atahualpa.¹⁴⁰ It is Robertson's views on Indians which differ from those of French writers. For Voltaire, they are only helpless victims, 'unhappy savages, almost naked and unarmed' who are 'pursued like deer'. Even the Mexicans are 'wretched, almost defenseless Indians'.¹⁴¹ Such views are essentially contemptuous, seeing the Indians almost as mistreated animals. Robertson, however, takes a very different view. Like Hutcheson, he sees the Indians as capable of patriotic dedication and, like the Darien writers he sees their resistance as just. This leads him to show forceful, patriotic and martial opposition to Spanish conquest by Indians, a presentation completely absent in Voltaire and Montesquieu. At Tenochtitlan, the Mexicans 'in their own defense, displayed valour which was hardly inferior to that with which the Spaniards attacked them' (A III: 61). Tenochtitlan is only conquered after a fight 'more equal than any between the inhabitants of the Old and New Worlds' (A III: 71). Raynal, admittedly,

¹⁴⁰ Montesquieu, Charles Louis de Secondat, *Persian Letters*, ed. and trans. by C.J. Betts, (London, 1980), p. 218; *Spirit*, p. 516.

¹⁴¹ Voltaire, *Essay*, II, pp. 396, 402.

comes close to Robertson's attitude, relating the story about the Mexican nobles who try to kill Cortes and suggesting that a future independent Mexico would venerate Guatimozin as a hero. However, Robertson's 'Scottish' Protestant bias differentiates him from Raynal in his views on America. Raynal, ex-Jesuit and *philosophe*, can unstintingly praise the Jesuits for their rule of Paraguay, while Robertson, in *Charles V*, sees this as only part of a sinister plan to take over America. Raynal expressly denies this motive.¹⁴² Robertson's contempt for Jesuits reappears in *America*, where they are shown falsifying accounts of California so as to be left a free hand there, and obstructing church reforms (*A* III: 358, IV: 53-54). Robertson is as hostile to Catholicism in the New World as he is in the Old. He praises Father Olmedo, who prevents Cortes from destroying Tlascalcan idols, but points out that he is very much an exception: 'one is astonished to find a Spanish monk [...] among the first advocates against persecution' (*A* II: 304-305). In Book VIII, which surveys eighteenth-century Spanish America, his view of the Catholic clergy is largely hostile. He commends 'the humane and persevering zeal of the Spanish missionaries' in protecting Indians, but also points out that many of the clergy 'in contempt of their vow of poverty [...] are so rapacious that they become the most grievous oppressors of the Indians' (*A* IV: 8-9, 52). The clergy are 'bigotted and illiterate', and characterized by 'the most dissolute licentiousness' (*A* IV: 49, 52). Robertson states that his evidence is taken from 'the testimony of the most zealous catholics' and adds a note stating that 'This description of the manners of the Spanish clergy, I should not have ventured to give upon the testimony of Protestant authors alone, as they may be suspected of prejudice' (*A* IV: 52, 329). As always when Robertson uses this tactical assumption of impartiality, Catholicism is left looking all the worse. Robertson also points out that the clergy have

¹⁴² Guillaume Thomas Raynal, *Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*, 3 vols, (Edinburgh, 1811), I, pp. 497, 502, 532-533; II, pp. 92-103.

failed to convert the Indians to any genuine Christianity. This is the result of Catholic methods of conversion. Unable to speak the Indians' language, missionaries employ 'a subtle distinction in scholastic philosophy between that duty of assent which is founded on a complete knowledge and conviction of duty, and that which may be yielded when both these are imperfect' (A IV: 55). The result of this practice, which is 'inconsistent with the spirit of religion', is that Indians are converted *en masse* without being given any comprehension of what Christianity means: 'As soon as any people, overawed by dread of Spanish power [...] expressed the desire of embracing the religion of their conquerors, they were instantly baptized' (A IV: 55-56). Robertson points out that 'Proselytes adopted with such inconsiderate haste', who were not 'instructed in the nature of the tenets to which it was supposed they had given assent' naturally retained their attachment to paganism (A IV: 56). Accordingly, 'whenever they think themselves out of reach of [...] the Spaniards, they assemble and celebrate their idolatrous rites' (A IV: 57). As Robertson's footnotes make clear, this evidence is taken from Catholic sources, so he cannot be accused of open partisanship, but his attack is a very Protestant one. Protestants, particularly Calvinists, believe that Christians should have constant access to its tenets, hence the emphasis on vernacular Bibles, and, especially in Scotland, on literacy. Robertson supported the publication of a Gaelic New Testament, a project opposed by a faction of the SSPCK which felt that Gaelic should be discouraged, because of 'the disadvantage of keeping up the distinction between the Highlanders and the other inhabitants of North Britain' as Boswell says. In supporting the production of Gaelic scripture, Robertson won the unlikely approbation of Johnson: 'Dr Robertson's opinion was surely right [...] I am glad the old language is taught, and honour the translator as a man whom God has distinguished'.¹⁴³ The Gaelic Testament

¹⁴³ Boswell, *Johnson*, I, pp. 329, 332.

was, of course, part of the general project to Presbyterianize the Highlands, and Robertson's support for it suggests a belief that Christianity requires proper access to the tenets of religion. Such a belief is totally absent in the Spanish Catholic clerics in America.

The anti-Catholicism of *America* may partially explain the attacks made on Robertson by the Mexican Creole Jesuit historian Clavigero. As part of his explanation of the signal failure of Catholics to convert the Indians, Robertson suggests that they are seldom ordained as priests. As a note makes clear, Clavigero disputed this suggestion, and Robertson reconsidered it (A IV: 332-339). However, the conclusion to which he comes is essentially the same, which is that, while there is no specific law excluding Indians from ordination, there is 'nonetheless some doubt concerning the ordination of Indians and some repugnance to it' (A IV: 338). It is generally accepted that Clavigero attacked Robertson due to patriotic indignation at his 'stadial' treatment of Indians, particularly his dismissal of Mexican civilization in Book VII.¹⁴⁴ Robertson, who admires defensive patriotism wherever he finds it, admits in his preface to *America* that Clavigero's attacks were motivated by 'zeal for the honour of his native country' (A I: xvi). However, Clavigero's modern biographer notices the puzzling fact that Clavigero is far more hostile to Robertson than to Buffon and de Pauw, both of whom were far more critical of America and its indigenes than Robertson. He explains this hostility as 'a reaction to his [i.e., Robertson's] Protestant prejudices'.¹⁴⁵ This seems a logical position. Protestant prejudice is certainly evident in *America*, and Robertson's

¹⁴⁴ Anthony Pagden, 'Identity Formation in Spanish America', in *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World*, ed. by Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden, (Princeton, 1987), pp. 51-93 (pp. 76-81); Brading, pp. 454-455, 461; Lenman, pp. 204-205.

¹⁴⁵ Charles E. Ronan, *Francisco Javier Clavigero, S.J. (1731-1787), Figure of the Mexican Enlightenment: His Life and Works*, (Rome, 1977), p. 296.

description of Clavigero as 'a weak and credulous bigot' suggests religious hostility.¹⁴⁶

Clavigero was, after all, a Jesuit.

There is another 'Scottish' concern which runs through *America*, which is the suspicion of monarchical power and hostility to despotism also found in the earlier works. This leads to a situation in which Robertson, while condemning the conquistadors for their treatment of the Indians and their part in an illegitimate enterprise, generally takes their side against despotic Spanish monarchs and the officials who represent them. Columbus's treatment by King Ferdinand is an example. According to Pagden, Robertson sees Columbus as 'a modern before his time' engaged in a struggle with 'uninformed bigots' who refuse to believe the New World exists.¹⁴⁷ This 'enlightened' interpretation is certainly supportable. Columbus is hindered by the 'ignorant and unenterprising' who insist that new countries do not exist because 'they could not have remained so long concealed' (*A I*: 98). However, much of Columbus's misfortune is the result of straightforwardly despotic malevolence from Ferdinand, which emphasizes Robertson's older 'Scottish' concern with overbearing monarchs. Ferdinand refuses to honour his commitment to Columbus whereby the offices of Viceroy and High Admiral in whatever territories Columbus might find were awarded to him as hereditary offices. Ferdinand and Isabella never keep their promise: 'under various pretexts, equally frivolous and unjust, they eluded all Columbus's requisitions to perform that which a solemn compact bound them to accomplish' (*A I*: 223). An important point about Robertson's treatment of this issue is that it goes against the prejudices that the prevailing scholarly view attributes to him: that strong monarchy is a welcome check to the independence of over-powerful subjects. Robertson commends

¹⁴⁶ Robertson to Lord Eliot, 3/4/1787, *MacPhail Collection*, MS 1036, f. 106, NLS.

¹⁴⁷ Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World: From Renaissance to Romanticism*, (New Haven and London, 1993), p. 99.

Ferdinand in the *Progress* for curbing Spanish feudal power.¹⁴⁸ Having curbed feudal power in Spain, Ferdinand would be foolish to allow it to develop all over again by making America a Columbus fief. Once again, however, Robertson in narrative history presents a view that clashes with that expressed in 'stadial' or 'conjectural' writing; instead of commending Ferdinand for his prudent concern for order and subordination, Robertson calls his conduct 'frivolous and unjust' and plainly believes Columbus is justly demanding his rights. He never receives them, and dies 'disgusted with the ingratitude of a monarch whom he had served with such fidelity' (A I: 240).

As Robertson admires Columbus, it is perhaps unsurprising that he should condemn the monarch who mistreats him. However, he takes the same view regarding the relations of Cortes and the Pizarros with Charles V and his representatives. Like Columbus, Cortes is treated shabbily by his monarch. Charles ennobles Cortes and gives him land, but 'peremptorily refused to invest him [...] with powers which he might find it impossible to control' (A III: 97). The same despotism that causes Charles attempt the reduction of Spain and Germany in the Old World plainly operate in the New as well. Cortes receives no reward for his services: 'The emperor behaved to him with cold civility; his ministers treated him sometimes with neglect, sometimes with insolence' (A III: 99). When he dies, Robertson describes him as 'ill-requited by the court he served' (A III: 99).

The greatest example of interfering despotism is Charles's Viceroy in Peru, Nugnez Vela. He is the epitome of officialdom, subservient to his master and tyrannical to his subjects: 'Nugnez Vela seems to have considered himself merely as an executive officer, without any discretionary power; and [...] he adhered to the letter of the regulations with unrelenting rigour' (A III: 222). All opposition is ruthlessly suppressed:

¹⁴⁸ See above, p. 162.

‘Several persons of rank were confined, and some put to death, without any form of trial’ (A III: 223).

Vela’s oppressive rule leads to a revolt led by Gonzalo Pizarro, who by this time is the only Pizarro brother left in Peru. Francisco the conqueror has fallen to internecine conflict, and Ferdinand is a prisoner in Spain. Even before the revolt, Robertson appears to believe that Gonzalo holds a justifiable resentment against ‘the behaviour of an ungrateful court towards his brothers and himself’ (A III: 242). Ferdinand is ‘a state prisoner in Europe’ and he himself is ‘reduced to the condition of a private citizen in a country, for the discovery and conquest of which Spain was indebted to his family’ (A III: 242). However, Gonzalo initially does nothing because ‘no Spaniard can easily surmount that veneration for his sovereign which seems to be interwoven in his frame’ so that ‘the idea of marching [...] against the royal standard filled him with horror’ (A III: 242). Robertson does not explicitly criticize this Spanish conviction, and this hesitation is characteristic of his treatment of Gonzalo’s conduct as a whole.

Robertson’s political commitments could not allow him explicitly to endorse rebellion, especially in a colonial situation. *America* was published in 1777, when this issue had become uncomfortably significant for Britain. Nonetheless, if we consider Robertson’s work as a whole, which reflects a ‘Scottish’ view of monarchy very different from the Spanish one, it is difficult not to believe that he despises Gonzalo’s servile views.

Ambivalence in Robertson’s account may also be caused by the fact that Vela, oppressive though he is, is in Peru to enforce laws for the better treatment of the Indians, which excite hostility from the conquistadors (A III: 214-215, 219-221). Of course, Robertson does not believe that Spain has the right to enforce any laws in America, but his sympathy for the Indians plight may have led him to be ambiguous in his view of a rebellion against the man who enforces laws for their well-being.

Robertson’s view of Gonzalo is at times hostile. After he has overthrown and

supplanted Vela, Robertson criticizes 'the violence of Pizarro's government' which 'punished every appearance of disaffection with unforgiving severity' (A III: 229-230). At the same time, he also seems to favour Gonzalo's rebellion. This is implied by his quoting the full text of a letter written to Gonzalo by his henchman Carvajal (A III: 234-235). The text is taken verbatim from Garcilaso, and appears in no other Spanish source. In fact, as Brading points out, it was Garcilaso's invention. Garcilaso, who wrote in the late sixteenth-early seventeenth centuries, followed the classical and humanist example of putting stirring words into the mouths of historical characters, to make a point. The point that Garcilaso was trying to advance, according to Brading, is that an independent Peruvian kingdom under a Pizarro dynasty was a desirable thing, and of course, he could not openly assert this.¹⁴⁹

Whether Robertson knew that the text of the letter was Garcilaso's invention is uncertain, but he did have doubts about Garcilaso's reliability.¹⁵⁰ Nonetheless, he repeats the full text of Carvajal's supposed letter, which suggests that he suspended his historian's scepticism about Garcilaso's reliability. According to Garcilaso, Carvajal recommends that Gonzalo renounce Spain, make himself king of Peru and cement this by marrying an Inca princess. Having repeated Carvajal's supposed remarks, Garcilaso hastily covers himself by adopting a pose of disapproval: 'I have omitted some even more improper remarks in Carvajal's discourse so as not to offend the ears of faithful and loyal subjects'. He also affects to commend Gonzalo's reluctance to follow Carvajal's suggestion, saying that 'his natural respect for his prince was stronger than the pleas of his friends'.¹⁵¹

That Robertson repeats an unsupported text from an author whom he thought

¹⁴⁹ Brading, pp. 267-268.

¹⁵⁰ See above, p. 242.

¹⁵¹ Garcilaso, II, pp. 1072-1073, 1073, 1075.

unreliable suggests sympathy with that writer's position. However, like Garcilaso, Robertson was constrained by circumstances. As the leader of a party pledged to support government, he could not openly approve of rebellion, and certainly not, in 1777, of colonial separation. However, that he favoured the project is suggested by the fact that, unlike Garcilaso, he is contemptuous of Gonzalo's failure to follow Carvajal's advice: 'The mediocrity of Pizarro's talents circumscribed his ambition within more narrow limits. Instead of aspiring at independent power, he confined his views to the obtaining from the court of Spain a confirmation of the authority which he now possessed' (*A* III: 236). Pizarro prefers to be a subject rather than an independent ruler, and Robertson seems to despise the 'mediocrity' of such a view.

That Robertson sides with the conquistadors in their relations with despotic monarchs and their representatives does not, however, lessen his dislike for their treatment of the Indians or his conviction that conquest is an illegitimate enterprise. He admires the martial courage and independence of the conquistadors, but not the ends to which they are used. According to his early biographer Alexander Stewart, 'if he acknowledged any virtues in these hardy adventurers, it was not because he approved of their atrocities'.¹⁵² In Robertson's view, 'The progress of the Spanish arms is marked with blood, and with deeds so atrocious as disgrace the enterprising valour that conducted them to success' (*A* III: 89). Smitten quotes this passage to suggest that the conquistadors' courage, for Robertson, must be balanced against the atrocities they commit.¹⁵³ However, it is clear that, in Robertson's view, the 'enterprising valour' in no way mitigates the atrocities. It is corrupted by them; they cast *disgrace* upon it. Cortes's torture of Guatimozin '*stains* the glory of all his greatest actions' (my

¹⁵² Alexander Stewart, 'Life of Dr William Robertson', in William Robertson, *History of Scotland during the Reigns of Queen Mary and James VI till his Accession to the Crown of England: with a Review of the Scottish History previous to that Period*, 3 vols, (London, 1820), I, pp. i-lxxxix (pp. lxiii-lxiv).

¹⁵³ Smitten, 'Impartiality', p. 64.

emphasis; *A* III: 72). Valour itself is admirable, but using it in the pursuit of an evil end corrupts it, causing the Spanish descent into barbarism. Robertson's point seems emphasized by what happens after the death of Atahualpa, when the Spaniards turn on each other in a series of bloody civil wars. Summing up these conflicts, Robertson states that 'Instances of such general and avowed contempt of the principles [...] which attach man to man and bind them together in social union, rarely occur in history' (*A* III: 259). What Robertson describes here is the collapse of civilization, a reversion to Hobbesian conditions. He also makes it clear that this occurs because of the 'imperial' situation in which avarice reigns unchecked:

It is only [...] where the prospect of gain is unbounded, and where immense wealth may cover the crimes by which it is acquired, that we can find any parallel to the levity, the rapaciousness, the perfidy and corruption, prevalent among the Spaniards in Peru (*A* III: 259).

In considering Robertson's view of empire, Book VIII of *America* is particularly important, because it is the only part of Robertson's work which discusses a *contemporary* imperial situation—that of eighteenth-century Spanish America. Those who see Robertson as an apologist for empire insist that Book VIII presents a positive picture. To Lenman, it presents 'a defence of the authoritarian regime of Charles III of Spain' in America.¹⁵⁴ Brown, likewise, sees Book VIII displaying 'a society progressing in manners and morals under an increasingly enlightened centralized European monarchy'.¹⁵⁵

If such views are true, then the view that Robertson saw empire as ultimately beneficial and Providentially inspired could be sustained. Furthermore, Robertson could be seen as approving of absolutism by 'enlightened despots' which would put him in the camp of Voltaire. He could also be aligned with Spanish thinkers like his friend

¹⁵⁴ Lenman, 'Spanish Sources', p. 203.

¹⁵⁵ Brown, 'Amerindians', p. 217.

Campomanes, who, as Pagden and Brading discuss, sought to solve the problems of Spanish America by increasing royal authority in the New World.¹⁵⁶ A positive Book VIII would also put him with Adam Smith, who believed that contemporary Spanish America was experiencing marked economic approval.¹⁵⁷

However, prevailing views are again based on a partial reading. Robertson does suggest, after describing the end of the conquistador period with the final suppression of Gonzalo Pizarro's revolt by Pedro de Gasca, that the American situation will now improve. Robertson states that 'Men less enterprising, less desperate and more accustomed to move in the path of sober and peaceable industry, settled in Peru', which argues that matters will get better (*A* III: 266). However, when Robertson describes eighteenth-century Spanish America (having omitted any description of the intervening period), the promise of improvement does not seem fulfilled. The violence of the conquering age is over, but Robertson is far from enthusiastic about the stifling Spanish absolute regime which has replaced it. Some of Book VIII does indeed suggest that Spanish America is improving under Bourbon rule, but at the same time, Robertson points out inherent problems in the situation that make efforts at improvement fruitless. Many of these problems are caused by the absolutist nature of Spanish government in the first place, so that attempts to remedy them with more government are destined to fail. Furthermore, the avarice upon which empire is founded nullifies attempts at reform. As with much of Robertson's work, there is a marked ambivalence between conflicting points of view, which may be explained again by literary considerations. If *America* was to be a success in Spain, Robertson could not antagonize Spanish government, which had power over publication. This may explain certain gestures in Book VIII, commending Spanish policy. These attempts at conciliation were inadequate

¹⁵⁶ Pagden, *Lords*, pp. 115-125; Brading, p. 504.

¹⁵⁷ Smith, *Wealth*, I, pp. 221-222.

from the Spanish official point of view, suggesting that Robertson's heart was not really in the whitewashing business.¹⁵⁸ Two views occur in Book VIII, a positive one and a negative one that undermines it. It is therefore possible, by reading Book VIII selectively, to present Robertson as a defender of empire.

It is agreed by authorities forty years apart that Robertson defused the 'black legend' of Spanish colonialism, the depiction of it as malevolent genocide.¹⁵⁹ Lenman states that Scots were not subject to the legend, and it is true that it was purveyed mainly by countries—like England—which were in colonial rivalry with Spain.¹⁶⁰ However, this does not mean, as I have tried to show, that Scots took a favourable view of Spanish activity. Frederick Stimson has even suggested that Robertson's work, which was popular in the USA, helped to disseminate the 'black legend' in that country.¹⁶¹

Robertson does seem to dismiss some of the more 'vulgarly' unhistorical political and religious aspects of the legend. He absolves the Spanish government of deliberate genocide, because it is a matter of record that Spanish monarchs have made 'regulations [...] framed with wisdom and dictated by humanity' for the protection of the Indians (*A IV*: 6). He also absolves the Catholic Church from the charge of oppressing the Indians, although with important reservations.¹⁶²

However, Robertson also approves wholeheartedly of royal attempts to break clerical power in America (*A IV*: 53-55). This would again appear to place him with reformist Spaniards like Campomanes who, as Brading shows, favoured the reduction

¹⁵⁸ See above, pp. 229-231.

¹⁵⁹ Humphreys, p. 21; Brown, 'Amerindians', pp. 206-207.

¹⁶⁰ Lenman, 'Spanish Sources', p. 206.

¹⁶¹ Frederick S. Stimson, 'William Robertson's Influence on Early American Literature', *Americas*, 14, (1957-1958), 37-43 (p. 37).

¹⁶² See above, p. 247.

of clerical power, but this reduction was part of a greater project for improving America by strengthening 'enlightened' absolutism.¹⁶³ Robertson is always ready to condone monarchical power when used against Catholicism, but this in no way implies approval of absolutism generally.¹⁶⁴ Between royal power and Catholic power, Robertson supports the lesser of two evils, but a lesser evil remains evil, as the bulk of his work shows.

Robertson also discusses 'improvement by the Bourbon monarchs' (*A IV*: 87). Contraband trade has been combated and coast guards introduced (*A IV*: 89-91). Trade has been loosened up by the introductions of register ships and the abolition of the Galeons (*A IV*: 92-94). The cocoa trade has been restored to Spain after years of being engrossed by Dutchmen (*A IV*: 95-97). Most importantly, trade, hitherto restricted to Cadiz, is now allowed between the colonies and any part of Spain, and inter-colonial trade is permitted (*A IV*: 101-105). 'The motives for granting this permission' writes Robertson 'are manifestly no less laudable than the principle on which it is founded is liberal' (*A IV*: 105). Such writing easily supports the Brown/Lenman view.

Robertson gives Spanish government credit for trying, but does he really believe that absolute government can do any good? His works show an ingrained 'Scottish' distaste for absolutism, and those Scottish writers who criticize empire, from Buchanan to Fletcher, all insist that monarchy should be firmly limited. As Robertson's treatment of monarchy in his works places him in this 'Scottish' tradition, it is doubtful if he really saw any potential for good in absolute government.

Robertson states that 'in every wide-extended empire, the form of government must be simple, and the sovereign authority such, that its resolutions may be taken with promptitude, and may pervade the whole with sufficient force' (*A IV*: 11). A letter in

¹⁶³ Brading, pp. 492-507

¹⁶⁴ See above, pp. 80-81, 126-127.

the *Edinburgh Advertiser* interpreted this as an endorsement of absolutism, 'the exploded opinions of Sir Robert Filmer'.¹⁶⁵ Gilbert Stuart, however, defended Robertson over this passage. 'A careless reader would be apt to think', he writes, 'that the passage favoured absolute government [...] we are unwilling to entertain such an opinion of Dr Robertson; in his other publications he hath appeared zealous for the liberties of men'. It is obvious, as Stuart says, that Robertson 'is not treating concerning the *excellence*, but concerning the *extent*' of the government.¹⁶⁶ That empires require absolute governments is, to Robertson, an objection against empires, not an endorsement of absolutism. In forming American government, Robertson notes disapprovingly, Spanish monarchs believed that they 'might issue the edicts requisite for modelling the government by a mere act of prerogative' (4 IV: 11-12). Their motive is greed: 'gold and silver [...] attracted the attention of their monarchs. Though they had contributed little to the discovery and almost nothing to the conquest of the New World, they instantly assumed the function of its legislators' (4 IV: 12). Despotism is established: 'the people [...] were entitled to no privileges independent of the sovereign, or that served as a barrier against the power of the crown' (4 IV: 13). Some independence develops in towns because 'even in the most despotic states, this feeble spark of liberty is not extinguished', but otherwise, 'the will of the sovereign is law' (4 IV: 13). Spanish America is ruled by Viceroyes, who 'not only represent their sovereign, but assume his regal prerogatives' (4 IV: 15). Robertson never approves of Viceregal government.¹⁶⁷ As early as 1755, reviewing a book about British America, he

¹⁶⁵ 'A Friend to the Constitution', 'To the Reverend Dr Robertson', *Edinburgh Advertiser*, no. 1410 (1/7/1777-4/7/1777), 9.

¹⁶⁶ [Stuart], Review of *America*, pp. 58, 59.

¹⁶⁷ See above, pp. 164, 251-252.

writes that in the 1680's, 'New England was subjected to the worst of all oppressions, the uncontrolled and insolent tyranny of a Viceroy'.¹⁶⁸ Theoretically, the Courts of Audience can restrain the Viceroy, but 'as legal restraints on a person who represents the sovereign are little suited to the genius of Spanish policy, the hesitation [...] with which it confers this power on the Courts of Audience are remarkable' (A IV: 18).

Absolutism also creates division. Due to 'the jealous attention of the Spanish court to secure the dependency of the colonies on the parent state, all departments of consequence are filled by persons sent from Europe' (A IV: 30). The Chapetones, or peninsular Spaniards, dominate colonial society: 'every public function, from the Viceroyalty downwards, is committed to them alone' (A IV: 30). The result of this is that the Creoles, or American-born Spaniards, have declined: 'by the rigour of a jealous government and by their despair of attaining that distinction to which mankind naturally aspire, the vigour of their minds is [...] entirely broken' (A IV: 31). Consequently, they 'waste life in luxurious indulgences, mingled with an illiberal superstition still more debasing' (A IV: 31). Superficially, Robertson's description of the Creoles agrees with Spanish views. As Brading points out, Spanish writers from the sixteenth century onwards denounced them as degenerate. However, this was usually done to justify strong government from Spain, the Creoles being too decadent to rule themselves.¹⁶⁹ Robertson, however, regards Creole degeneracy as the *result* of Spanish government policy, not a justification of it. Not unnaturally, there is hostility between Chapetone and Creole, which the government encourages: 'The court of Spain, by a refinement of distrustful policy, cherishes those seeds of discord' (A IV: 32). This 'not only prevents the two most powerful classes [...] from combining against the parent

¹⁶⁸ *Edinburgh Review*, p. 99.

¹⁶⁹ Brading, pp. 197, 200, 297-298, 425, 440, 471.

state, but prompts each, with the most vigilant zeal, to observe the motions and counterract the schemes of the other' (A IV: 32-33). Spanish policy has made America a nation of spies.

Avarice obstructs improvement. Because of it, the Indian laws are worthless: 'the avarice of individuals was too violent to be controlled by the authority of laws' (A IV: 7). Government is powerless, because the avarice upon which empire is founded, corrupts the very officials sent to protect the Indians: 'as indigent and rapacious as the adventurers over whom they presided', officials 'adopt their contemptuous ideas of the conquered people, and instead of checking, encouraged and connived at their excesses' (A IV: 7-8). Once again, Robertson identifies the 'imperial' contempt as a major contribution to colonial evils. Robertson's description of the Indians in contemporary Spanish America shows the futility of the laws. It also shows clearly the ambivalence which Robertson adopts in dealing with awkward situations. He knew, from Grantham, that the Spaniards prided themselves on 'the wisdom and humanity of their Indian laws', but also that 'these laws never are or will be executed'.¹⁷⁰ The result of such knowledge is that Robertson points out the goodness of the laws, but simultaneously subverts this by stressing their ineffectuality. The tax imposed on the Indians, he states, is 'no exorbitant sum in countries where [...] the value of money is extremely low' (A IV: 37). He then directs his reader to a note, where he deflates his own argument: 'Moderate though this tribute may appear, such is the extreme poverty of the Indians [...] that the exacting of it is intolerably oppressive' (A IV: 325). Concerning Indian labour, he states that 'the nature of the work which they must perform is defined, and an equitable recompense is granted' (A IV: 38). However, because of Spanish greed. Indians are 'compelled to undertake the more unpleasant task of extracting ore [...] no

¹⁷⁰ Grantham to Robertson, 31/10/1776, *R-McD*, MS 3942, f. 283, NLS.

less unwholesome than operose' (A IV: 39). In an appended note, he disputes Spanish assertions that 'working in mines is not noxious' (A IV: 325). Quoting a governmental report, so that he cannot be accused of bias, Robertson points out that 'where the Indians have been compelled to labour in the mines, their numbers were reduced to the half' (A IV: 325). In the text, Robertson states that the conscript labour system is 'under regulations framed with a view of rendering it as little oppressive as possible to the Indians' (A IV: 39). The appended note again ruins the picture 'the tasks seem to be in a great measure arbitrary and [...] are extremely burdensome and often wantonly oppressive' (A IV: 326). Robertson concludes by saying that 'notwithstanding the numerous injunctions of the Spanish monarch, the Indians still suffer [...] from the avarice of individuals and from the exactions of the magistrates who ought to have protected them' and 'groan under many of the insults and wrongs which are the lot of a dependent people' (A IV: 43). This again shows Robertson's conviction that Spanish occupation of America is wrong. Reducing people to 'dependent' status can only lead to evil. Robertson's description of the Indian situation shows how easy it is to see him as an imperial apologist by ignoring portions of the work. A true apologist, however, might have omitted those subversive notes.

The Spanish obsession with mines is a major block to reform. Most authorities consider Robertson's concern with this matter to be economic. O'Brien believes that Robertson sees the Spanish imperial exercises illustrating 'the dangers of cultural vigour not properly regulated by a good understanding of economic and social development' (NE: 155). Phillipson similarly sees Robertson's work as a criticism of 'the mercantilist delusion that wealth consisted in gold'.¹⁷¹ This again places Robertson in the 'cosmopolitan' camp. Montesquieu's main consideration of Spanish American

¹⁷¹ Phillipson, 'Providence', p. 63.

enterprise in *Spirit of the Laws* concerns the damaging effect of gold and silver on the Spanish economy.¹⁷² Raynal considers Spanish colonial productions at length, discussing vanilla, cochineal and indigo as well as gold and silver. After a brief paragraph on the effect of gold-hunger on morals, he proceeds to a sober discussion of the mining and refining process.¹⁷³ Raynal appears to have a genuine and encyclopaedic interest in colonial production, whereas Robertson is primarily interested in gold. His discussion of colonial production devotes eight pages to mining while the other productions of America are summarized in barely three (*A IV*: 60-67, 68-70). Robertson does not neglect economic considerations, and quotes a long passage from Smith about the economic inadequacies of gold mining regarding capital and profit (*A IV*: 66).¹⁷⁴ However, that Robertson is content simply to reproduce Smith's account suggests that economics are not his major concern. He is more at home moralizing about effects of the greed behind gold mining. As Pagden says, he sees the Spanish obsession with mining as 'a kind of disease'.¹⁷⁵ He compares it to 'the rage for deep play' and its 'charms' as 'so bewitching and take such full possession of the mind, as even to give a new bent to the natural temper' (*A IV*: 64). Avarice warps human nature completely. Government can do little to change the situation. In fact it encourages it: 'In the Spanish colonies, government is studious to cherish a spirit which it should have laboured to depress' so that 'by the sanction of its approbation' it encourages the 'inconsiderate credulity which has turned the active industry of Mexico and Peru into such an improper channel' (*A IV*: 66). So little change has in fact taken place that 'almost every person who takes any active part in the commerce of New Spain or Peru, is still engaged in some adventure of this kind' (*A IV*: 67).

¹⁷² Montesquieu, *Spirit*, pp. 393-396.

¹⁷³ Raynal, I, 514-519, 519, 520-523.

¹⁷⁴ Smith, *Wealth*, II, p. 562.

¹⁷⁵ Pagden, *Lords*, p. 73.

Whether government can bring about any alteration to the situation seems doubtful: 'there is no effort of legislation more arduous, no experiment in policy more uncertain, than to attempt to revive the spirit of industry where it has declined' (A IV: 111). As far as improvement goes, 'much remains to do' (A IV: 111). In fact, attempts by government are self-defeating. New regulations are 'too rigid and systematical to be carried into complete execution' (A IV: 113). Cracking down on contraband trade is also a flop: 'the Spaniards [...] being circumscribed in their mutual intercourse by the jealousy of the Crown, or oppressed by its exactions, have their invention continually on the stretch how to elude its edicts' (A IV: 113). Government, responsible for the evil in the first place by its 'jealousy' cannot correct the evil by becoming more 'jealous'. This is made worse by the corruption inherent in the situation, so that 'the very officers appointed to check contraband trade are often employed as instruments in carrying it on' (A IV: 113). As a way of illustrating the situation, Robertson quotes a sixteenth-century official letter, lamenting corruption in Spanish America (A IV: 114). After this, Robertson devastatingly observes that 'Time has increased the evils which he [i.e., the letter-writer] lamented as early as the reign of Philip II' (A IV: 114). Spanish America is *worse* under the 'enlightened' Bourbon monarchs than it was under Philip II. This does not suggest that Robertson saw Spanish empire as ultimately beneficial. In fact, the whole system is rotten:

A spirit of corruption has infected all the colonies of Spain [...] Men far removed from the seat of government, impatient to acquire wealth [...] allured by opportunities too tempting to be resisted and seduced by the example of those around them, find their sentiments of honour and duty gradually relax (A IV: 114-115).

It is greed that drove the first conquerors, and greed—in which Spanish monarchs have a vested interest—that continues to corrupt the whole enterprise. Because the absolute monarchy is part of Spanish America's problem, Robertson doubts that it can also be

the source of the solution. At the end of Book VIII, he discusses government attempts to correct Viceregal abuses, which, again, only exist because Spain exported absolutism to America. Spanish government tries to combat the despotism and venality of Viceroy by decree, ordering their terms of office shortened. This only makes matters worse. It 'renders them more rapacious, and adds to the ingenuity and ardour wherewith they labour to improve every moment of power which they know is hastening fast to a period' (A IV: 125). Absolutist attempts to repair the evils of absolutism cannot succeed. In the final paragraph, Robertson admits that one Viceroy, de Croix, 'instead of bringing home exorbitant wealth, returned with the admiration and applause of a grateful people' (A IV: 125). This, however, only emphasizes the general corruption. If de Croix were a typical Viceroy, there would be no need to single him out.

3) Robertson's Unfinished History: British America

Had Robertson confined his criticisms to Spain, he could still be seen as an advocate of *British* empire. That Robertson cannot be seen in this light is suggested by his statement that Spanish 'principles of colonisation [...] have served as our model and that of all nations in their establishments in the New World'.¹⁷⁶ As Robertson's view of Spanish empire is negative, this statement suggests that his negative view embraces all New World empires. This seems confirmed by his treatment of English conduct towards the Indians in North America.

Robertson initially approves of English behaviour in Virginia, because the early colonists interact with Indians on equal terms. He approves of the marriage of John Rolfe and Pocahontas, daughter of the Indian chief Powhatan. Marriage is, after all, a recognized instrument of political alliance between sovereign nations, and, after the

¹⁷⁶ Robertson to Keith, 26/8/1776, *Hardwicke Papers*, Add. MS 35350, f. 61, BL.

Rolfe/Pocahontas marriage, 'a friendly correspondence subsisted between the colony and all the tribes subject to Powhatan' (A IV: 197). To Robertson's regret, however, this leads to nothing; most of the English feel the usual 'imperial' contempt for 'inferior' peoples:

The Indians, courting [...] an union, offered their daughters in marriage to their new guests; and when they did not accept of the proffered alliance, they naturally imputed it to pride, and to their contempt of them as an inferior order of beings (A IV: 198).

As with the Spaniards, 'imperial' contempt is joined to greed. When the profits of tobacco cultivation become evident, the English become as obsessed with it as the Spaniards are by gold, and this 'was productive of fatal consequences' (A IV: 199). Obsessed with tobacco, the English neglect 'every other species of industry' and 'the land which ought to have been reserved for raising provisions, and even the streets of Jamestown, were planted with tobacco' (A IV: 200). Neglecting to grow food, the English 'renew their demands upon the Indians, who, seeing no end to these exactions [...] began to form schemes of vengeance' (A IV: 200). Robertson's view of the subsequent conflict differs from that of his English and English-American sources. John Smith, who played an important role in the Virginia settlement, attributes the conflict to the anger of Chief Oppecanough at the shooting of one of his warriors. Robert Beverley, a Virginian writing in 1705, agrees. Both Beverley and Smith state that the warrior was justly shot, for killing a colonist called Morgan.¹⁷⁷ Robertson, however, does not mention Indian misdemeanours. As we have seen, he attributes Indian hostility to English provocation. This provocation leads to a sudden massacre of colonists by the Indians. John Smith calls them 'perfidious and inhumane people' who 'put on a more

¹⁷⁷ John Smith, *Generalle Historie of Virginia, New England and The Summer Isles, Together with the True Travels, Adventures and Observations, and a Sea Grammar*, 2 vols, (Glasgow, 1907), I, p. 279; Robert Beverley, *History and Present State of Virginia*, ed. by Louis B. Wright, (Chapel Hill, 1947), p. 53.

unnaturall brutishnesse than beasts', and describes the massacre in detail.¹⁷⁸ Beverley also describes the massacre luridly, showing Indians 'destroying Man, woman and Child, according to their cruel way of leaving none behind to bear resentment'.¹⁷⁹

Robertson also notes that the massacre displayed 'that rancorous cruelty with which savages treat their enemies' (A IV: 208). However, if Robertson condemns Indian savagery, he is far harsher about English reprisals:

The conduct of the Spaniards [...] was openly proposed as the most proper model to imitate; and, regardless, like them, of those principles of faith, honour and humanity which regulate hostility among civilized nations [...] the English deemed ever thing allowable that tended to accomplish their design (A IV: 209).

In calling the English no better than Spaniards, Robertson rejects a cherished English belief. As Pagden shows, the English insisted that their relations with Indians were benevolent, not to be compared with those of the Spaniards.¹⁸⁰ Robertson shows Englishmen deliberately following Spanish example, and this is confirmed by his sources. John Smith feels that reprisals could be more severe; 'worthie Ferdinando Cortes' he points out, 'had scarce three hundred Spaniards to conquer the great citie of Mexico'.¹⁸¹ Smith is criticized by another of Robertson's sources, the eighteenth-century William Stith for following 'the detestable example of the Spaniards'. Stith, however, is not really sympathetic to the Indians. He states that the colonists 'were something excusable, if their Patience being worn out by [...] the Perfidiousness, Baseness and almost invincible Brutality of that People, they at last gave too much way to the Dictates of Anger and Violence'.¹⁸² Robertson makes no excuses for English brutality. To defeat the Indians, the English resort to 'offers of peace and oblivion, made

¹⁷⁸ John Smith, I, pp. 281, 281-282.

¹⁷⁹ Beverley, p. 51.

¹⁸⁰ Pagden, *Lords*, pp. 86-87.

¹⁸¹ John Smith, I, p. 307.

¹⁸² William Stith, *History of the First Discovery and Settlement of Virginia*, (London: 1753), p. 233.

with [...] artful appearances of sincerity' (A IV: 210). The English intention is to attack the Indians when they are off guard. Robertson's description of this event is his most explicit statement of the moral reversal of 'savage' and 'civilized' behaviour in 'imperial' situations:

The behaviour of the two people seemed now to be perfectly reversed. The Indians, like men acquainted with the principles of integrity and good faith on which the intercourse between nations is founded, confided in the reconciliation [...] while the English, with perfidious craft, were preparing to imitate savages in their revenge and cruelty (A IV: 210).

The plan is successful, and 'the tribes nearest to the English were totally extirpated' (A IV: 210). Robertson calls this 'an atrocious deed, which the perpetrators laboured to represent as a necessary act of retaliation' (A IV: 210). He plainly does not see such behaviour as justified.

Robertson is equally critical of English conduct in New England during the Pequot War. Here again, he disagrees with his sources. Cotton Mather, the eminent Puritan divine, invokes Providence. The Pequots are 'bloody Salvages' and the 'marvellous providence of God' is shown 'prospering the New English Arms, unto the utter extirpation of the Quarrelsome Nation'.¹⁸³ Robertson, however, never suggests Providential approval for English actions. He sees the Pequots as patriots who 'foresaw [...] that the extermination of the Indian race must be the consequence of permitting the English to spread over the continent' (A IV: 297). The Pequots propose an alliance with their enemies, the Naragansets, who are asked to 'co-operate with them in expelling a common enemy' (A IV: 298). When the Naragansets ally with the English instead, Robertson calls this 'imprudence and treachery' (A IV: 298). In this view, Robertson again disagrees with one of his sources, Thomas Hutchinson, governor of Massachusetts. Hutchinson calls the Pequots cunning liars who 'artfully urged that the

¹⁸³ Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana, Books I and II*, ed. by Kenneth B. Murdoch and Elizabeth W. Miller, (Cambridge, Mass., 1977), p. 166.

English were come to dispossess them of their country, and that all that the Naragansets could hope for from their friendship was the favour of being the last devoured’.

Hutchinson’s view of Indians generally is hostile: ‘Indian fidelity is proverbial in New England, as Punick was in Rome. The Naragansets [...] kept to the treaty until the Pequods were destroyed, and then they grew insolent and treacherous’.¹⁸⁴ For Robertson, Indians are treacherous if they fail to unite with other Indians against the English. For Hutchinson, Indians who fight the English are traitors.

The Indians are defeated, and English reprisals are severely criticized in terms stressing the patriotic aspect of the conflict:

Instead of treating the Pequods as an independent people, who made a gallant effort to defend [...] the freedom of their nation, they retaliated upon them all the barbarities of American war. Some they massacred in cold blood, others they gave up to be tortured by their Indian allies, a considerable number were sold as slaves in the Bermudas, the rest were reduced to servitude among themselves (A IV: 301-302).

As in Spanish America, the Europeans are barbarians and the Indians are patriots. English predominance is achieved by conquest and dispossession. As Robertson clearly believes that the right of conquest is no right at all¹⁸⁵, there is reason for doubting O’Brien’s assertion that Robertson is ‘in no doubt as to the legal entitlement of Britain to her colonies’ (NE: 162-163). Likewise, a question mark must be placed against the disdain for ‘lesser breeds’ attributed to Robertson by Bernard Aspinwall, whose view is entirely founded on the ‘stadial’ Book IV. Even Aspinwall, however, grudgingly admits that Robertson admires ‘primitives’ who ‘aspire to independence’.¹⁸⁶ There is a certain contradiction in his attitude, because by ‘stadial’ reckoning—which Aspinwall regards as conclusive in Robertson’s view—‘primitives’ cannot display patriotism.

¹⁸⁴ Hutchinson, pp. 53, 53-54.

¹⁸⁵ See above, p. 240.

¹⁸⁶ Bernard Aspinwall, ‘William Robertson and America’, in *Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, pp. 152-175 (pp. 156, 160, 161).

Millar discusses Indians frequently in his *Distinction of Ranks*, but only mentions patriotism in connection with classical and feudal societies.¹⁸⁷ Kames expressly states that patriotism only develops in the third, agrarian stage.¹⁸⁸ Robertson, however, even in the 'stadial' Book IV, briefly praises Indians for 'that love of their country, which prompts them to brave danger' (*A* II: 232). His narrative history is a long confirmation of this un-'stadial' view.

Robertson's history of British America raises the question of the American War of Independence. It was due to increasing uncertainty about the course of events in America that Robertson decided to publish the Spanish American history separately in 1777, as he admits in the preface to *America* (*A* IV: i-ii). This is probably also why the British American sections were abandoned, only being published after Robertson's death by his eldest son. As Smitten points out, it was certain, in the prevailing political atmosphere, that Robertson 'could not maintain his polite stance with respect to events in America'. Whatever he wrote, the work would certainly 'be assessed in resolutely partisan terms'.¹⁸⁹ Smitten has noticed the literary strategy of mock-balance and impartiality that makes up part of Robertson's 'polite stance', even once mentioning Tacitus in this context.¹⁹⁰ However Smitten believes that Robertson was genuinely committed to the paramount importance of civil order and subordination (even at the expense of liberty), to Catholic Relief, to 'Britishness', to empire in general and British empire in particular.¹⁹¹ If Smitten is right, there is no real explanation for Robertson's Tacitean equivocation. He could simply have espoused all these things wholeheartedly,

¹⁸⁷ John Millar, 'The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks', in William C. Lehmann, *John Millar of Glasgow, 1735-1801: His Life and Thought and his Contributions to Sociological Analysis*, (Cambridge, 1960), pp. 167-322 (pp. 240, 256-257, 274).

¹⁸⁸ Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Sketches of the History of Man*, 2 vols, (Edinburgh, 1774), I, p. 439.

¹⁸⁹ Jeffrey Smitten, 'Moderatism and History: William Robertson's Unfinished History of British America', in *Scotland and America*, pp. 163-179 (pp. 171, 175).

¹⁹⁰ Smitten, 'Arminianism', p. 293.

¹⁹¹ See above, pp. 26, 55-56, 91, 223, 254.

without offending either government or the majority of his 'polite' influential readers. The unfinished history of British America is notably equivocal. If Smitten's view is correct, then Robertson could have written a straightforwardly pro-government history, like his fellow Scot, George Chalmers, a wholehearted supporter of British rule. Describing the charter granted to the Virginia Company in 1609, Chalmers notes that exemptions from certain tax and customs dues were granted by King James. This he perversely interprets as evidence strengthening the British position: 'Thus was affirmed the general right of taxing them without their consent, because they were exempted from duties payable within the colony for a limited time'. For Chalmers, taxation without representation is justified by history.¹⁹² Robertson uses Chalmers as a source, but does not even discuss taxes in connection with the 1609 charter, and shows no inclination to draw conclusions like Chalmers's, which might be expected from a wholeheartedly pro-British Robertson on this crucial point (*A IV*: 185-186).

Of course, the Moderate compromise required co-operation with government. Robertson and the Moderates accordingly took an official line favouring the British government in American affairs in the 1770's. Accordingly, as Sher shows, Robertson and his party organized loyal addresses from the General Assembly and nullified attempts by openly pro-American High-Flyers to express dissent. Sher, however, insists that this official line also reflects Robertson's personal convictions.¹⁹³ O'Brien, likewise, states that Robertson 'had little sympathy with the Revolution' (*NE*: 161). Smitten believes that Robertson was 'committed by position to ministerial support and by conviction to British supremacy'.¹⁹⁴ The first part of this statement is valid; the second is open to doubt, particularly in view of the 'Scottish' antipathy both to empire

¹⁹² George Chalmers, *Political Annals of the Present United Colonies from their Settlement to the Peace of 1763*, (London, 1780), p. 26.

¹⁹³ Sher, *Church*, pp. 263, 270, 275.

¹⁹⁴ Smitten, 'Moderatism and History', p. 171.

and to overbearing governmental power evident in all his works. There is enough evidence to confirm David Armitage's view, that Robertson 'had divided sympathies' over America, or at least to justify Andrew Hook's statement that 'Robertson's position is not easy to determine'.¹⁹⁵ The impossibility, in the prevailing political climate, of producing a work that would satisfy both his official commitments and his personal convictions in a way that would be publicly and personally acceptable, may explain why the history was abandoned.

Evidence suggests that Robertson was not wholly pro-British. John Douglas, reporting on *America's* reception in England, warns that the preface 'has been interpreted as if you favoured the Claims of America [...] you call that a *Civil War* which the general voice of the Public, agreeing with administration, calls a *Rebellion*'.¹⁹⁶ It is interesting that Robertson never changed this—'civil war' remains in later editions (*A* IV: i).

Robertson's relations with Burke may also provide a clue. It is possibly significant to the question of Robertson's political views that Robertson criticized Burke over the French revolution¹⁹⁷, but seems to have been on friendly terms with him during the American one, when Burke took a political position opposite to the official pro-British line taken by Robertson. Burke was one of the first people to whom Robertson had a copy of *America* sent after publication, stating that 'I believed you to be one of the best judges in the kingdom of the subject on which it is written'.¹⁹⁸ That Robertson thinks highly of the pro-American Burke as a judge of American colonial history may

¹⁹⁵ David Armitage, 'The New World and British Historical Thought: From Richard Hakluyt to William Robertson', in *America in European Consciousness, 14593-1750*, ed. by Karen Ordahl Kupperman, (Williamsburg, 1995), pp. 52-75 (p. 69); Andrew Hook, *Scotland and America: A Study of Cultural Relations, 1750-1835*, (Glasgow and London, 1975), p. 68.

¹⁹⁶ Douglas to Robertson, 31/5/1777, *R-McD*, MS 3943, f. 13, NLS.

¹⁹⁷ See above, p. 80.

¹⁹⁸ Robertson to Edmund Burke, 5/6/1777, *Correspondence*, Ref. WWM BKP 1/973, Sheffield City Archives.

hint at Robertson's views. Burke praised *America*, and, in return, sent Robertson his *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol*, a pro-American production.¹⁹⁹ Of course, in sending *America* to Burke, Robertson may only have been following his policy of bringing his works to the attention of influential men, but Robertson seems to have felt a sincere friendliness towards Burke before 1790. When Burke visited Edinburgh in 1784, Robertson cordially invited him to call.²⁰⁰ Burke, significantly was also involved in a work on colonial history, having, as O'Brien says, collaborated with his cousin William Burke in an *Account of the European Settlements in America* (NE: 163). Robertson cites this work in a note to his derogatory remarks on Montezuma and says that it has 'much merit' (A III: 22, 380).²⁰¹ As the work was published anonymously, however, there is no way of knowing if Robertson was aware of Burke's involvement.

Robertson preached a sermon on America in 1778, of which some notes survive. However, as Smitten acknowledges, Robertson is 'more conciliatory than other Moderates who addressed American affairs in their sermons'.²⁰² He deplores the fact that Britain is at war with people 'who ought to be joined hand in hand with us'.²⁰³ Robertson denounces British hubris: 'flushed with the pride of our former victories and secure of conquest, we thought we had only to appear in the field to subdue—We now find that we have been mistaken'. This is important because pride, and the contempt for 'inferiors' implicit in British assumptions of easy victory, are what lead to the deserved downfall of Charles V.²⁰⁴ Robertson hints that British pride has suffered a deserved fall, although of course this could not be explicitly stated especially as the sermon was

¹⁹⁹ Burke to Robertson, 9/6/1777, in *Correspondence of Edmund Burke*, ed. by Thomas W. Copeland et al., 10 vols, (Cambridge: CUP, 1958-1978), III, pp. 350-351, 352.

²⁰⁰ Robertson to Burke, 15/4/1784, *Correspondence*, Ref. F(M)A.i, 19., Northamptonshire Record Office.

²⁰¹ See above, pp. 238-239.

²⁰² Smitten, 'Moderatism and History', p. 172.

²⁰³ William Robertson, 'Notes for a Fast Day Sermon on the American Revolution', in *MWC*, pp. 139-142 (p. 139).

²⁰⁴ See above, p. 199.

preached in London.²⁰⁵ There is also no bellicosity in the sermon; on the contrary, Robertson urges his hearers to ‘pity those of our Ennemies who have fallen’.²⁰⁶

Robertson’s great-nephew, Lord Brougham, says that Robertson was ‘the warm friend’ to American independence.²⁰⁷ Sher dismisses this as ‘wishful thinking of a nineteenth-century Whig’.²⁰⁸ However, this dismissal is too hasty; it is not unreasonable to suppose that a member of Robertson’s family might know something that Robertson did not make public. Brougham also notes that Robertson admired George Washington, which is confirmed by Gleig’s description of Robertson expressing this admiration to American visitors.²⁰⁹

As Hook observes, Robertson’s works were popular in America, and were published there both before and after the Revolution. They were also much admired by the Founding Fathers, like Jefferson and John Adams.²¹⁰ Adams appealed to ‘the opinion of Dr Robertson’, citing his treatment of the Spanish revolts in *Charles V* in calling for united response to British oppression.²¹¹ Benjamin Franklin visited Scotland, and was on good terms with Robertson and other literati while there.²¹² Henry Marchant, an American who was with Franklin in Scotland in 1771, noted that when he and Franklin met Robertson, ‘the Conversation was much on American affairs’ and that Robertson was plainly ‘a Friend to Civil and Religious Liberty’.²¹³

²⁰⁵ Smitten, ‘Moderatism and History’, p. 172.

²⁰⁶ Robertson, ‘Notes’, p. 142.

²⁰⁷ Brougham, p. 315.

²⁰⁸ Sher, *Church*, p. 263.

²⁰⁹ Brougham, p. 315; Gleig, p. lvii.

²¹⁰ Hook, pp. 79-80; Aspinwall, p. 154.

²¹¹ John Adams, *Papers of John Adams*, ed. by Robert J. Taylor et al., 10 vols to date, (Cambridge: Mass., 1977—), II, pp. 303-304.

²¹² Richard B. Sher, ‘An “Agreable and Instructive Society”: Benjamin Franklin and Scotland’, in *Sociability*, pp. 181-193 (pp. 186, 188-189).

²¹³ J. Bennett Nolan, *Benjamin Franklin in Scotland and Ireland*, (Philadelphia, 1938), p. 176.

Dalphy Fagerstrom comes closest to understanding Robertson's position, saying that he 'submitted to government views at the expense of earlier sympathies'.²¹⁴

Whether this submission was real or only official, however, remains uncertain. In 1766, Robertson welcomed the repeal of the Stamp Act, which Americans detested.

Robertson writes that he is 'glad to hear the determination of the House of Commons concerning the Stamp Act' and that 'I rejoice [...] that a million of men in America have some chance of running the same great career which other free people have held before them'. Robertson also says that 'I do not apprehend revolution or independence sooner than these must and should come'.²¹⁵ It is clear from this that Robertson believes that America should in the future be independent.

In 1775, his position appears to change. Where he opposed the Stamp Act in 1766, he now criticizes American objections about tax, stating that 'the distinction between *taxation* and *regulation* is mere folly'. He sounds belligerent when he states that 'We are past the hour of lenitives'. Despite this seeming bellicosity, his description of American demands is not unsympathetic:

If they have any meaning, it must be that they should be free states [...] at liberty to buy and sell and trade where and with whom they please. This they will one day attain, but not just now if there be any degree of political wisdom or vigour remaining. At the same time, one cannot but regret that prosperous growing states should be checked in their career. As a lover of mankind, I bewail it; but as a subject of Great Britain, I must wish that their dependence on it should continue.²¹⁶

Robertson is still saying that liberty must come, even though to allow it now would be bad for British prestige. Robertson draws a line between his public and private attitudes. As a citizen of Great Britain, Robertson *must* oppose independence. The citizen of Britain is, in a sense, Robertson's official role. It is in his role as such a citizen that he

²¹⁴ Dalphy I. Fagerstrom, 'Scottish Opinion and the American Revolution', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 11 (1954), 252-276 (p. 258).

²¹⁵ Robertson to William Strahan, 1766, in Dugald Stewart, p. 85.

²¹⁶ Robertson to Strahan, 6/10/1775, in Dugald Stewart, p. 84.

performs his agreed task of supporting government measures regarding America. 'Great Britain', however, was a recent creation, with which Scots like Robertson, as I have tried to show, were not wholly comfortable. In his private capacity, as 'a lover of mankind' and possibly as the 'Scottish' inheritor of an anti-'imperial' tradition, he thinks differently.

Further clues to Robertson's position can be found in his letter complimenting Adam Smith on his *Wealth of Nations*:

If the English be capable of extending their ideas beyond the narrow and illiberal arguments introduced by the mercantile supporters of revolution principles, and countenanced by Locke and some of their favourite writers, I should think your book will occasion a total change in several important articles [...] I am happy to find my own ideas concerning the limitations on the colony trade established much better than I could have done myself.²¹⁷

Smitten discounts the importance of this letter, but his quotation of it omits the derogatory remarks about 'the English'.²¹⁸ These are important, because it shows that Robertson is no longer aligning himself with his southern neighbours as a citizen of Great Britain. Instead, he attacks them. Written in 1776, and taken in conjunction with his remarks about colonial trade limitations, it is clear that this criticism blames English narrowness and illiberality for the American conflict. No longer in his public persona of 'Briton', Robertson condemns the domineering behaviour of 'the English' in true 'Scottish' fashion, although Scots are not its victims.

As is often the case with Robertson, evidence is not conclusive. The history of British America, however, provides further clues. Robertson's views incline more to those of his American-born sources, like Stith, who view history from an American perspective, than to those of the rabidly pro-British Chalmers. Chalmers, though Scottish, was very different from Robertson. As William Ferguson shows, he belonged

²¹⁷ Robertson to Smith, 8/4/1776, in *Correspondence*, p. 192.

²¹⁸ Smitten, 'Moderatism and History', p. 177.

to the Church of England, hated Presbyterianism, and was a glutinously sentimental Jacobite in love with Mary's memory. He had Toryish views and 'worshipped authority'.²¹⁹ This is strongly evident in his American history.

Robertson's anti-authoritarian bias emerges in his treatment of the early Virginian government established by Governor Thomas Dale. This is based on martial law, which Robertson damns as 'so violent and arbitrary that even the Spaniards themselves had not ventured to introduce it' (A IV: 193). Robertson admits that Dale exercised his power 'with prudence and moderation', but this does not imply approval of the system. To suggest that the English used system rejected even by Spain, is strongly critical. Stith also condemns the adoption of martial law.²²⁰ Chalmers, however, points out that 'this system of jurisprudence, though little favourable to the genius of liberty, we shall find became the common law of the colony', thus making a prescriptive case for authoritarianism in America.²²¹

Early Virginia is, of course, ruled by the Virginia Company, and it is under company rule that a constitution is granted. In 1619, the colonists were 'permitted to assume legislative power, and to exercise the noblest function of free men' (A IV: 203). A legislative assembly is formed. Chalmers insists that this legislature was 'dependent and inferior'.²²² Robertson, on the other hand, states that after 1619, the colonists must be considered as 'not merely [...] dependent on the will and orders of their superiors, but as free men and citizens' (A IV: 204).

In 1624, King James attacks the Virginia Company. This is administered by a general court in London, and Robertson makes it clear that James attacks are motivated by his overblown notions of monarchy. James dislikes the Company's court because

²¹⁹ William Ferguson, 'Introduction', p. 18.

²²⁰ Stith, p. 122.

²²¹ Chalmers, p. 31.

²²² Chalmers, p. 56.

'the proclamations of the crown [...] with respect to the commerce and police of the colony, were canvassed there with freedom and censured with severity' (A IV: 212). This is 'ill-suited to the lofty ideas which James entertained of [...] the extent of his prerogative' (A IV: 213). James arbitrarily sets out to remodel colonial government: 'Without regarding the rights conveyed to the company by their charter [...] he, by virtue of his prerogative, issued a commission empowering some of the judges, and other persons of note to examine into all the transactions of the colony' (A IV: 214). At the same time, 'in a strain of authority still higher, he ordered all the records and papers of the company to be seized and two of its principal officers to be arrested' (A IV: 214). To Robertson such actions are 'violent and arbitrary' (A IV: 214). James's new model for colonial government, unsurprisingly, vests supreme authority in a London-based governor and council 'to be originally appointed by the King' (A IV: 215). However, in acting like this, 'James and his ministers encountered a spirit, of which they seem not have been aware' (A IV: 216). The Company resists him, and Robertson's description of this is sympathetic. He describes them as 'averse to the abolition of a popular form of government, in which every proprietor had a voice, in order to subject a colony [...] to the dominion of a small junto absolutely dependent on the crown' (A IV: 216). As a result, the question is brought before the court of the King's Bench, and the lawsuit 'terminated, as was usual in that reign, in a decision perfectly consonant to the wishes of the monarch' (A IV: 217).

In describing these events, Robertson seems to agree with Stith, who attacks James's treatment of the company as 'brought about with all imaginable Instances of Unrighteousness and Oppression'.²²³ However, Robertson wrote at a time when influential economic thought was becoming hostile to government by chartered

²²³ Stith, p. 329.

companies, and Robertson seems aware of the need to take this into account. He states that 'there is not perhaps any mode of governing a colony less friendly to its liberty than the dominion of an exclusive corporation' (A IV: 217). However, as Robertson has described, it is under Company rule that Virginia receives the constitution of 1619, and James's attack on the company which reorganizes it on despotic principles. Robertson's statement about company rule, therefore, looks like a mere gesture to fashionable views. It is virtually a paraphrase of Adam Smith: 'the government of an exclusive corporation of merchants, is, perhaps, the worst of all governments for any country'.²²⁴ Robertson's 'Scottish' suspicion of monarchical power is absent in Smith, who appears to believe that humanity is naturally servile: 'That kings are the servants of the people, to be obeyed, resisted, deposed or punished [...] is not the doctrine of Nature. Nature would teach us to submit to them for their own sake'; like Hume, Smith appears to allow resistance only in the case of true monsters like Nero or Caligula.²²⁵ Smith, of course, did not favour aggressive British policy to force the Americans of the 1770's to submit, and proposed that, while the Americans should be taxed, they should also be represented in Parliament.²²⁶ This is a 'British' solution, extending the Union concept of 1707 to include America. Robertson never suggested this solution. Considering his ambivalence about the 1707 Union, and his place in the militia issue, it is possible that Robertson never proposed a Smithian solution to the American problem because he was not satisfied with how the Union concept had worked out in Scotland.

Robertson's 'Scottish' suspicion of monarchical power makes him unable to approve fully of the ending of company rule. He dutifully describes the disadvantages

²²⁴ Smith, *Wealth*, II, p. 570.

²²⁵ Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. by D.D. Raphael and A.L. Macfie, (Indianapolis, 1982), p. 53; *Lectures*, p. 320.

²²⁶ Smith, *Wealth*, II, pp. 933, 944-945; See above, p. 43.

of such rule, but devotes far more space to criticizing the way in which James ended it (A IV: 217-219, 212-217).

Robertson is equally critical of the policy followed by James's successor, Charles I. He declares Virginia to be 'immediately subordinate to his jurisdiction' and appoints Sir George Yardely as governor. Yardely and his council are 'fit instruments for carrying this system of arbitrary rule into execution', and, under Charles, 'Virginia knew no other law than the will of the Sovereign' (A IV: 221). Taxes, significantly, are imposed 'without once calling the representatives of the people to authorize them' and 'the colonists were bereaved of political rights, which they deemed essential to freedmen' (A IV: 222). Charles also grants tobacco monopolies and 'property in land was rendered insecure by various grants of it, which Charles inconsiderately bestowed upon favourites' (A IV: 222). Yardely is succeeded by Sir John Harvey: 'Rapacious, unfeeling and haughty, he added insolence to oppression, and neither regarded the sentiments, nor listened to the remonstrances of the people under his command' (A IV: 223). Eventually, the Virginians rise up, arrest Harvey and send him to England. Robertson now changes his tune abruptly. After criticizing at length the tyranny of Virginian government by Charles and his nominees, he now calls the revolt against Harvey 'a proceeding so summary and violent as is hardly consistent with any idea of regular government, and can be justified only in cases of such urgent necessity as rarely occur in civil society' (A IV: 223). Suddenly, Robertson subscribes to the grudging allowance of resistance found in Hume, Smith or Burke. Considering the time in which Robertson wrote this history, and his political commitments, it is hardly surprising that he does so. There can be no question that this does not represent his true view, because it contradicts the view of resistance taken in all his histories, and also the general trend of Robertson's description of Virginian government prior to the revolt. It is a sudden, contradictory change, and suggests someone correcting himself after having gone too

far in a dangerous direction. This direction leads to Hutcheson's doctrine that 'if oppressive laws are made with respect to the colonies [...] they are not bound to continue in their subjection'.²²⁷ 'Oppressive laws' have certainly been made in Virginia, but Robertson could not go any further down the Hutchesonian path.

Charles appoints a new governor and makes some concessions to the colonists, as a result of which Virginia stays loyal to the crown during the Civil War. However, at the Restoration, Virginia's loyalty is 'ill rewarded' (A IV: 231). All it receives from Charles II are 'unproductive professions of esteem' (A IV: 232). Furthermore, they have the Navigation Acts foisted on them, that set of mercantilist regulations designed so that colonies 'may be kept in a firmer dependence' on the mother country (A IV: 234). Writing about such questions in the 1770's Robertson is again obliged to be careful, although his personal views on the matter seem clear from his 1776 letter to Smith.²²⁸ Robertson takes a similar position, although cautiously. In introducing the subject, he again adopts a Tacitean balance, stating the different views held about the Navigation Acts:

On one side of the Atlantic, these regulations have been extolled as an extraordinary effort of political sagacity [...] to which the parent state is indebted for all its opulence and power. On the other, they have been execrated as a code of oppression, more suited to the illiberality of mercantile ideas than to the extensive views of legislative wisdom (A IV: 235).

Robertson goes on to say that 'Which of these opinions is best founded, I shall examine in another part of the work' (A IV: 235). As the work is unfinished, this examination does not exist, but Robertson's position can be guessed at by his discussion of the discontent caused by the Acts in Virginia. Forts are built to enforce the laws, and ships set to patrol the coasts. The Virginians, 'seeing no prospect of obtaining exemption

²²⁷ Hutcheson, *System*, II, p. 308.

²²⁸ See above, pp. 275-276.

from the act, set themselves to evade it', and 'disaffection spread through the colony' (A IV: 236). This disaffection includes a revolutionary attempt by ex-Cromwellian soldiers, who 'formed a design of rendering themselves masters of the country, and of asserting its independence on England' (A IV: 236). Robertson's mild criticism of this as a 'rash act', suggests that he sees some justification for it, particularly as he goes on to describe further destructive effects of the new laws on Virginia: 'Tobacco [...] sunk prodigiously in value, when they were compelled to send it all to one market' (A IV: 237). Chalmers stresses that 'the tobacco monopolies' were 'plainly reciprocal'. He points out that, while Virginia was only allowed to trade with England, it was also granted a monopoly of tobacco production by laws forbidding tobacco cultivation in England and Ireland.²²⁹ Robertson never suggests that Virginia derived any benefit from the Acts; in his view, they reduced Virginia to 'general languor and despondency' (A IV: 237). To make matters worse, Charles II 'imprudently imitated the example of his father, by granting [...] large tracts of land in Virginia to his courtiers, as tended to unsettle the distribution of property in the country' (A IV: 237).

Due to all these factors, 'the indignation of the people became general', and it is obvious that Robertson is sympathetic to this indignation. This is further suggested by his treatment of Nathaniel Bacon, who leads a rebellion. Bacon is described as 'ambitious, eloquent, daring, and prompted either by honest zeal to redress the public wrongs or allured by hopes of raising himself to distinction' (A IV: 238). Robertson carefully leaves the question of Bacon's motives open, but does suggest that 'honest zeal' may have been involved. Chalmers, however, only lists Bacon's motives as 'interest, revenge, or ambition'.²³⁰ Bacon assembles an armed band, marches on Jamestown, and the council there makes Bacon 'general of all the forces in Virginia'

²²⁹ Chalmers, pp. 242-243.

²³⁰ Chalmers, p. 332.

(*A IV*: 240). However, as soon as Bacon has left, the council turns on him, which Robertson calls 'a transition not unusual in feeble minds' in which 'presumptuous boldness succeeded to excessive fear' (*A IV*: 240). They proclaim Bacon a rebel. Bacon, responding to 'conduct which he branded with the name of base and treacherous', promptly marches back to Jamestown, causing Governor Berkeley to flee. Robertson then notices that, upon the flight of Sir William Berkeley [...] the frame of civil government seemed to be dissolved' (*A IV*: 241). There is an obvious parallel here with the situation caused by the flight of James VII and II in 1688. As Robertson clearly approved of English and Scottish responses to the flight of that monarch, it is also possible that he approves of Bacon's actions in Virginia after the flight of Berkeley. He notices that Bacon tried to establish his authority 'on a more constitutional basis, by obtaining the sanction of the people's approbation' (*A IV*: 241). Bacon is clearly not just a military adventurer relying on force alone.

Bacon, however soon 'sickened and died', and, as 'none of his followers possessed such talents, or were so much objects of the people's confidence' as he was, the rebellion dies out. Chalmers' description of Bacon's death is far more severe: 'Amidst all these evils, with which his ambition or revenge had cursed his country, Bacon, happily for himself and it, sickened and died'. Chalmers also points out that Charles II, after the unrest, recalls his land grants, and that a new Governor grants pardons and oblivion to the rebels.²³¹ Robertson, however, acknowledges none of this; by his account, 'under successive governors, administration was carried on with the same arbitrary spirit that distinguished the latter years of Charles II and the precipitate counsels of James II' (*A IV*: 244). The Virginians are 'deprived even of that last consolation of the oppressed, the power of complaining', because of 'a law, which,

²³¹ Chalmers, pp. 335, 340-341.

under severe penalties, prohibited them from speaking disrespectfully of the governor, or defaming, either by words or by writing, the administration of the colony' (A IV: 245). Furthermore, as Robertson ominously notes 'the laws restraining their commerce were felt as an intolerable grievance, and nourished in secret a spirit of discontent' (A IV: 245). Chalmers gives such laws prescriptive justification by noting that 'Similar laws against "the propagation of false news" [...] occur among the more early acts of assembly of all the colonies'. In obvious reference to current events, he adds that 'Happy would it have been for them [...] and for the empire, had they at all times been vigorously executed'.²³²

At this point, Robertson's history of Virginia breaks off. This again suggests that Robertson's views on America were not wholly pro-British. His descriptions of colonial abuses refer to events under Stuart monarchs, which could be defended as respectable anti-Jacobitism. A wholly pro-British Robertson could have used an account of America *after* 1688 to stress how much better off America became, thereby removing any justification for American actions in the eighteenth century. That he did not continue his history past 1688 suggests that Robertson saw no improvement in America after the Revolution. The Navigation Acts, after all, remained in force. Criticism of British American policy after 1688 would have been awkward, in the 1770's. That Robertson avoided writing about post-Revolution America again argues that he could not reconcile his personal views with his official commitments.

The second part of Robertson's unfinished history deals with New England. Smitten suggests that this section is 'concerned with religious fanaticism, and [...] critical of claims to independence, because they often seem to arise from this distempered base'.²³³ Michael Fry sees Robertson's concern as 'making the exercise of

²³² Chalmers, p. 341.

²³³ Smitten, 'Moderatism and History', p. 168.

authority more rational, so as to strike a balance between the excess of it in a Virginia burdened with vain economic constraints, and the deficiency of it in a New England prey to religious fanaticism'.²³⁴ There are problems with such views. In the first place, Robertson *is* concerned with authority in New England, but it is religious authority, not civil. In the second, his concern with religious fanaticism is, in fact, a sectarian distaste for Independency. Robertson's whole attitude to New England is sectarian, as can be seen from his different treatment of the Puritans before and after they leave England. He sides with them in their struggles with the Church of England, and the monarchs who uphold it. Once they have escaped that oppression, however, he disapproves of wildly individualistic Independent conduct (which would not be allowed under a Presbyterian system). This conforms to historical attitudes. Scottish Presbyterians and English Independent Puritans were united in their opposition to the episcopalian structures and rituals of the Church of England, and the Episcopalian church in Scotland, but they also disagreed vehemently with each other about church government. Despite this, however Robertson is far less critical of New England political behaviour than Smitten and Fry believe. Smitten agrees that he does not 'hurl charges of sedition' like his English sources, Chalmers and Daniel Neal, a historian sympathetic to the Puritans, but, as Robbins points out, Erastian in his views.²³⁵ Robertson's sectarian position is evident in his early review of an American history by James Douglas. In America, he observes, there is 'an unlimited toleration of all Christians, Papists alone excepted'. Robertson makes no comment on this, as the wholehearted supporter of toleration as which he is often presented might be expected to do. In addition, he points out that 'the Independents are [...] the most numerous party in Massachusetts-bay. The wildest

²³⁴ Michael Fry, 'A Commercial Empire: Scotland and British Expansion in the Eighteenth Century, in *Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, pp. 53-69 (p. 64).

²³⁵ Smitten, 'Moderatism and History', p. 170; Robbins, p. 239.

fanaticism prevailed among them for many years'. Robertson criticizes specifically *Independent* fanaticism. Robertson's review also attacks the Church of England: 'missionaries employed by the Society in England for propagating the Gospel pervert the design of that noble charity [...] they employ themselves in making proselytes of the Dissenters'.²³⁶

In dealing with the persecution of Puritans by the Church of England and its monarchs, Robertson naturally had to remember the prejudices of his English readership, but, though tactful, his treatment of events appears to point towards his own sympathies. His attitude to Catholicism remains unchanged; the Reformation is the time when 'the superstitions and corruptions of the Romish church prompted different nations of Europe to throw off its yoke' (A IV: 250). However, some Protestants made a complete break with the past, following Calvin, whom Robertson admires for the 'abilities, learning and austerity' by which he 'acquired high reputation' (A IV: 250). However, 'where the steps of departure from the church of Rome were taken with greater deliberation, and regulated by [...] the supreme magistrate, the separation was not so wide. Of all the reformed churches, that of England has deviated least from the ancient institutions' (A IV: 251-252). This comparative approach looks impartial, and even complimentary to the prudence of the English type of reformation—until we remember Robertson's view on the 'superstitions and corruptions' of Catholicism. It is from this superstitious and corrupt institution that the Church of England has 'deviated least'. Behind Robertson's apparent impartiality, there is a veiled criticism. This seems confirmed by his view of the Church of England's founder: 'The violent but capricious spirit of Henry VIII, who, though he disclaimed the supremacy, revered the tenets of the Papal See, checked innovations in doctrine or worship' (A IV: 252). The persecutions

²³⁶ *Edinburgh Review*, pp. 101, 105.

under Mary I cause Protestants to flee to Europe, where, 'with a spirit natural to men in their situation', they 'eagerly adopted institutions which appeared to be further removed from the superstitions of Popery than those of their own church' (A IV: 253). Returning to England with the accession of Elizabeth, the Marian exiles wished 'to obtain such a reformation in the English ritual as might bring it nearer the standard of purity' (A IV: 254).

The Puritans are disappointed by Elizabeth. Robertson is highly critical of her autocratic religious policy. Elizabeth is 'fond of pomp and ceremony', things of which Robertson, judging by his histories, disapproves in religion (A IV: 254).²³⁷ She also has an overblown view of her power and abilities: 'possessing, like her father, such confidence in her own understanding [...] she never doubted the capacity to judge and decide with respect to every point in dispute' (A IV: 254). Elizabeth's views 'led her [...] to approach nearer to the church of Rome, in the parade of external worship' (A IV: 255). Again, we must remember Robertson's view of Catholicism to see that this is not a neutral description. Robertson also seems cautiously to admire Puritan conduct in the face of Elizabeth's opposition: notwithstanding the 'cruel disappointment' which Elizabeth gives them, they still 'inveighed against the superstitious practises with which religion was defiled in their own church' (A IV: 256). Robertson gives some space to the counter-argument made by defenders of these practises, 'that these forms and ceremonies were in themselves things perfectly indifferent', which 'tended [...] to affect the heart and warm it with devout and worthy sentiments' (A IV: 256). However, he appears more convinced by Puritan refutation of this argument, that 'the rites in question were inventions of men, superadded to the simple and reasonable service required in the word of God' (A IV: 256). This is further confirmed by his description of

²³⁷ See above, pp. 147-148, 198.

the Puritan view on the disputed ceremonies. According to them, such practises 'had been long employed by a society manifestly corrupt' (i.e., the Catholic church), and 'ought now to be rejected, as relics of superstition unworthy of [...] a church which gloried in the name of *Reformed*' (A IV: 257).

Elizabeth persecutes the Puritans. Some of them are 'deprived of their benefices, others were imprisoned, some were fined, and some put to death' (A IV: 258). A new court, the High Commission, is created and run on principles 'hardly less odious [...] than those of the Spanish Inquisition' (A IV: 258). Attempts are made by Parliament to 'check these arbitrary proceedings' (A IV: 258). However, they are squashed by the despotic Elizabeth, who 'imposed silence [...] in a tone as imperious and arrogant as was ever used by Henry VIII' (A IV: 258). Robertson notes severely that 'so tamely obsequious were the guardians of the people's rights, that [...] they obeyed those unconstitutional commands' (A IV: 259). Parliament compounds its servility by consenting to an act punishing the avoidance of church services by penalties ranging from a fine to death, which Robertson calls an 'iniquitous statute, equally repugnant to the ideas of civil and of religious liberty' (A IV: 259).

It is again noticeable that Robertson's view of these events differs strongly from Hume's. Hume tends to see matters from Elizabeth's point of view. Unlike Robertson, Hume believes that Elizabeth 'could scarcely be accused of severity and imprudence' in her religious policy. From her standpoint, Puritans 'were dangerous to all kingly government; and under colour of preaching the word of God, presumed [...] to censure the actions of the prince'. An 'enlightened' distaste for persecution leads Hume to call the High Commission 'a real *inquisition*', but his description of Elizabeth's view of the situation suggests that he also sympathizes with her views.²³⁸

²³⁸ Hume, *History*, IV, pp. 176, 208, 209.

After the 'iniquitous statute', the Puritans begin to think of forming alternative church governments, and here Robertson's sectarianism is again evident. 'The more sober and learned Puritans' he writes, 'inclined to that form which is known by the name of Presbyterian' (*A IV*: 260). Other Puritans, 'however much they might approve the equality of pastors which that system establishes, reprobated the authority which it vests in various judicatures, descending [...] in regular subordination' (*A IV*: 260). Robertson describes the ideas of such Puritans as 'wild notions' (*A IV*: 260). It is followers of the 'wild notions' that settle New England. The first colony, at New Plymouth is founded by extreme Puritans motivated by a particularly 'wild notion' by which they 'threw all their property into a common stock', and 'considerably retarded the progress of their colony' (*A IV*: 267). The colonists of the more successful Massachusetts colony avoid such excesses, but they also 'adopted, in their infant church, that form of policy which has since been distinguished by the name of Independent' (*A IV*: 275). Robertson criticizes the intolerance of this new church, stating that 'the very men who had themselves fled from persecution became persecutors, and had recourse [...] to the same unhallowed weapons against the employment of which they had lately remonstrated' (*A IV*: 277). As a result, 'men of note' are expelled and sent home to England (*A IV*: 277).

Robertson then immediately reminds the reader that Independents do not have the monopoly on persecution. Church of England intolerance continues to send Independents to America. Robertson attacks 'the intolerant spirit of Laud which 'exacted conformity [...] with greater rigour than ever', so that 'the condition of such as had any scruples with respect to this became intolerable', thus causing them to flee to America (*A IV*: 277). According to Smitten, Robertson's language is free of 'strong partisan connotations' regarding the religious controversies that contribute to New

England history.²³⁹ It is doubtful, however, if Robertson's Anglican contemporaries—Johnson, for example—would have agreed. Robertson's freedom in speaking of Anglican or Independent intolerance contrasts sharply with his recitence about Scottish Presbyterian intolerance, which is only criticized once, in a short paragraph in *Scotland*.²⁴⁰

Robertson continues to criticize the Independent colony as a place where influence is 'acquired by the wildest enthusiasts' (A IV: 283). At the same time, he seems to favour the civil freedom established by these Independents, and does not appear to feel that this liberty is excessive, as Smitten and Fry believe he does.²⁴¹ The colonists soon create an assembly, and, in 'assertion of their own rights, they enacted, that no law should be passed, no tax should be imposed, and no public officer should be appointed, but in the general assembly' (A IV: 285). A wholly 'British' Robertson might be expected to make some criticism regarding the question of taxation, but he does not. Instead, he says that 'the pretexts for making this new arrangement were plausible' (A IV: 285). 'Pretexts' suggests a mild criticism, and Robertson does mention briefly that an assembly of colonial representatives is not provided for in the colony's Royal charter (A IV: 284). However, he seems to find the colonists' conduct reasonable. After all, 'the form of government in their own country had rendered familiar the idea of delegating their rights, and committing the guardianship of their liberties to representatives of their own choice' (A IV: 285). Robertson does not seem disapproving when he states that 'The colony must henceforward be considered, not as a corporation whose powers were defined, and its mode of procedure regulated by its charter' (A IV: 286). On the contrary, it is 'a society which, having acquired or assumed

²³⁹ Smitten, 'Moderatism and History', p. 170.

²⁴⁰ See above, p. 136.

²⁴¹ See above, p. 284.

liberty [...] adopted a constitution or government framed on the model of that in England' (A IV: 286).

Robertson goes on to state that 'however liberal their system of civil policy might be [...] the spirit of fanaticism continued to spread, and became ever day wilder' (A IV: 286). This draws a clear distinction between the colony's civil liberty, of which Robertson seems to approve and which is conformable to 'Scottish' Presbyterian ideas about liberty, and its religious wildness, of which Robertson, as a Presbyterian, cannot approve. The unsatisfactory nature of Independent church polity is emphasized by the proliferation of sects. Robertson singles out a sect led by a Mrs Hutchinson, 'founded on the system which is denominated Antinomian [...] and tinged with the deepest enthusiasm' (A IV: 289). Disapproval of Antinomianism is common to all organized religion. Robertson's objection to it here has a doctrinal element; he points out that Mrs Hutchinson 'preached only a covenant of works' (A IV: 289). This notion is anathema to Presbyterians, as it is to all Calvinists, who base themselves on a covenant of *grace*, not works. The idea that salvation can be achieved by good works is in direct opposition to the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, by which an elect few are destined for salvation and the remainder damned, a doctrine which makes good works of minimal importance.

Robertson's history ends with a description of the confederacy of New England colonies formed in 1643, which he calls 'a considerable step towards independence' (A IV: 307). Robertson does not seem critical in his description of this event; his language is neutral. He states that in confederating, the colonies 'seem to have considered themselves as independent societies, possessing all the rights of sovereignty and free from the controul of any superior power' (A IV: 308). Only when the new confederation begins to coin money, in 1652, does he become faintly critical. Robertson, considering his circumstances, could not have taken any other approach to

such a flagrant breach with the mother country; as he says, coining is 'a prerogative peculiar to sovereignty [...] which no subordinate member in any state is entitled to claim' (4 IV: 310). Robertson further states that 'this usurpation escaped without notice', because at this time, 'the Independents [...] engrossed the whole direction of the affairs of Great Britain' (4 IV: 310). It is an open question as to whether Robertson's main criticism is directed at the colonies or at Cromwellian government. No patriotic, Presbyterian Scot could take a wholly favourable view of Cromwell, the Independent who conquered Scotland and prohibited the General Assembly from meeting. Robertson is writing here of events in 1652, when Scotland was firmly under the Cromwellian jackboot. His view of Cromwell is sectarian and hostile: 'he had deeply imbibed all the fanatical notions of the Independents, and was perpetually surrounded by the [...] teachers of that sect' (4 IV: 311). Robertson's history breaks off here, after a brief description of a Cromwellian scheme to send New England colonists to Jamaica (4 IV: 311-312).

Robertson's histories of both British and Spanish America seem to raise questions about the view of him as 'spokesman for empire'. As I have tried to show, there is a deep suspicion of empire connected with the 'Scottish' tradition, which Robertson seems to display in his narrative writing. At the same time, other 'Scottish' concerns with religion and government are also strongly present, forming a line of continuity between Robertson's seemingly disparate histories. His last work, on India, to which we now turn, firmly fixes this continuity and again places a large question mark against any assertion that Robertson defended empire and despised non-European peoples as inferior.

CHAPTER VII

India

Writing to Gibbon about *India*, Robertson states that 'I have a partial fondness for this child of my old age'.¹ This 'fondness' may be explained by the fact that *India* is the only one of his works produced after his retirement in 1780, and so not written under the constraints of his political commitments. Accordingly, he seems more outspoken in *India* than when he was an active politician. *India* is the work which most openly expresses his doubts about empire, raising important objections to the view that sees Robertson as its defender. Scholars who hold this view find *India* embarrassing. Smitten says that Robertson's *India* 'seems to have no logical place at all in his corpus'.² O'Brien admits that Robertson 'appears to favour a contraction [...] of British political control' in India (*NE*: 163, 164). As O'Brien describes *America* as an 'exploration of Europe's implementation of its entitlement to rule', it is clear that she has to see *India* as an exception to what she assumes is Robertson's position on empire (*NE*: 151). However, if the alternative argument about Robertson's 'Scottish' concerns is applied, then *India* is the logical culmination of a series of histories in which those concerns appear in different contexts. Michael Fry links Scottish views on empire with the Scottish past, suggesting, for example, that the hostility to mercantilism found in eighteenth-century Scots has roots in the Scottish Darien experience. Fry also notes that Scots tended to 'meet and trade with distant peoples on equal terms'. However, when he discusses Robertson's *India*, he still sees Robertson as a believer in the 'benevolent mission of the British', to 'bring India up to the higher level of commercial society'.³ Carnall is more correct to say that Robertson 'nowhere

¹ Robertson to Gibbon, 25/8/1791, in Gibbon, *Miscellaneous Works*, II, p. 434.

² Smitten, 'Robertson's Letters', p. 50.

³ Fry, 'Commercial Empire', pp. 56-57, 59, 67.

suggested that European rule was indispensable to the well being of [...] India'.⁴ In fact, Robertson suggests the opposite, in his description of the Zamorin of Calicut's reaction to Vasco da Gama, the first European to reach India by sailing around Africa. After first welcoming Da Gama, he then tries to kill him, 'as if' writes Robertson, 'he had been inspired with a foresight of all the calamities now approaching India by this fatal communication opened with the inhabitants of Europe' (*I*: 145). This ominous description does not suggest a positive view of European presence.

While Robertson's doubts about empire are clear in *India*, he is still not as outspoken as he might have been. Personal considerations may have influenced him here. Like many Scots of the period, Robertson had Indian connections. As Smitten points out, Robertson had two nephews and two sons involved in India.⁵ One son, James, distinguished himself in battle, and Robertson took paternal pride in the 'manner in which my son has distinguished himself at the taking of Nundy-droog'.⁶ Many Scots were involved in India in the late eighteenth-century. This is often thought to be the result of Henry Dundas's control of Indian patronage after 1785, but Scots were prominent in India long before this.⁷ Warren Hastings seems to have had a preference for Scots.⁸ These considerations may have prevented Robertson from making too explicit a criticism of a system of which his family had been the beneficiaries.

Robertson, in *India*'s preface, notes that the idea for the work was

⁴ Geoffrey Carnall, 'Robertson and Contemporary Images of India', in *Expansion*, pp. 210-230 (p. 217).

⁵ Smitten, 'Robertson's Letters', pp. 52-53.

⁶ Robertson to Andrew Strahan, 15/4/1792, *William Robertson Papers*, MS 4512, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University.

⁷ G.J. Bryant, 'Scots in India in the Eighteenth Century', *Scottish Historical Review*, 64 (1985), 22-41 (p. 23).

⁸ John Riddy, 'Warren Hastings: Scotland's Benefactor?', in *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings: Papers from a Bicentenary Commemoration*, ed. by Geoffrey Carnall and Colin Nicholson, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1991), pp. 30-57 (p. 34).

the result of his 'perusal of Major Rennell's Memoir for Illustrating his Map of Indostan' (I: i). This again provides a clue to Robertson's attitude, because Rennell, although English, believed that British expansion in India had gone far enough. He criticizes 'the many who think that the British might have extended their possessions in Hindoostan *ad libitum*'. Britain's major territorial possession, Bengal, is a freak, acquired 'under circumstances [...] such as may never occur again'. Rennell favours the Portuguese, who 'wisely made choice of insular stations [...] and never appeared to have possessed any very considerable extent of territory'.⁹ Robertson seems to agree with this, stating that conquest was not essential to trade in India: 'Nothing was more requisite in conducting this trade, than to settle a few skilful agents in proper places' and 'to prepare a proper assortment of goods' (I: 186). Robertson does not go into cases, but it is clear that Britain, in conquering Bengal, did not follow this policy, so criticism could be implied.

Rennell's book was part of an increasing, often critical interest in India and Britain's role in it. These concerns were sharply illustrated by current events. As Carnall says, 'the immediate context of the *Disquisition*, was the protracted impeachment of Warren Hastings'.¹⁰ The chief motivator of this impeachment, Burke, resembles Robertson, because he also had to function in conflicting contexts. He was Irish and deeply concerned about the Irish Catholics, and at the same time he was a British parliamentarian working in an English-dominated world which despised Irish Catholics. If anything, his position was more acute than Robertson's, because Robertson's political activity was confined to Scotland and the Scottish church, whereas Burke was in the middle of English-dominated Westminster. As Conor Cruise

⁹ James Rennell, *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan, or the Mogul Empire*, (London, 1788), pp. xc, cv.

¹⁰ Carnall, 'Robertson and India', p. 212.

O'Brien shows, Burke's Irishness undoubtedly contributed to his sympathy for Indians and his hostility to Hastings.¹¹ By the same rule, Robertson's 'Scottish' concern with national liberty, patriotism, conquest and foreign domination appear to influence his own views on India. Both Carnall and O'Brien agree that Robertson's position on India resembles Burke's (*NE*: 164).¹² However, Burke is more favourable, in his impeachment speeches, to British rule than Robertson is in *India*. He does not imply that British rule in India is detrimental *per se*. According to Burke, British rule 'would have prognosticated order, peace, happiness and security to the natives', had it not been for Hastings. It is Hastings's misuse of British rule which he attacks, not the rule itself, which he saw as infinitely superior to an independent Bengal which was 'the prey and sport of the infernal ambition of its own grandees'.¹³ Rennell also states that under British rule, 'the Bengal provinces are in a better state [...] than any other of the Asiatic countries'.¹⁴ Robertson never makes such suggestions.

Burke also seems to take a Providential view of the British conquest of Bengal, calling it 'an immediate designation of the hand of God'. Lenman, who sees Robertson as an advocate of European superiority, suggests that his advice on British India was to 'accept what God's Providence has brought into being, and make the best of it'.¹⁵ This restates the view that Robertson saw empire as Providentially guided. The obvious objection to this view is that *India* gives no Providential sanction to empire. Robertson attributes the origin of long distance travel and trade to Divine thoughtfulness in creating camels for the use of the Easterners: 'by the provident

¹¹ Conor Cruise O'Brien, *The Great Melody: A Thematic Biography and Commented Anthology of Edmund Burke*, (London, 1992), pp. 271-272.

¹² Carnall, 'Robertson and India', p. 213.

¹³ Edmund Burke, *Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, ed. by Paul Langford et al., 9 vols to date, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981—), VII: *The Launching of the Hastings Impeachment*, ed. by P.J. Marshall, pp. 314, 315.

¹⁴ Rennell, p. cvi.

¹⁵ Bruce P. Lenman, 'The Scottish Enlightenment, Stagnation and Empire in India, 1772-1813', *Indo-British Review*, 21 (1996), 53-61 (p. 58).

bounty of Heaven, they were furnished with a beast of burden' suitable for long journeys in inhospitable climates (*I*: 3). Robertson devotes a lengthy note to camels (*I*: 347-349), which again notices 'the wise economy of Providence' (*I*: 348). However, Providential sanction is allowed here only for peaceful travel and trade, not for empire and subjugation.

The work also shows other Christian views of history, which emphasize the gulf between Robertson and Gibbon, Hume and Voltaire. Phillipson suggests that the favourable treatment of Hinduism in *India* argues that Robertson advocated 'a new world religion [...] absorbing all creeds and denominations'.¹⁶ However, it is in *India* that Robertson reasserts the superiority of Christian scriptures over other sources. The first page dogmatically describes 'the Books of Moses' as 'the most ancient and only genuine record of what passed in the early ages of the world' (*I*: 1). This is notably different from the approach of Voltaire, who disputes the antiquity of the Pentateuch, and questions whether Moses wrote it.¹⁷

Robertson cites Genesis and Kings as authorities about the antiquity of Eastern civilization' (*I*: 2). Furthermore, he stresses that sacred sources are to be treated differently from secular ones: 'Wherever the inspired writers [...] mention occasionally any circumstance that tends to illustrate the subject of my enquiries, I shall attend to it with reverence. Whatever other writers relate, I shall examine with freedom' (*I*: 2). This approach is what Gibbon rejected when he wrote on Christianity, stating that 'the great law of impartiality [...] obliges us to reveal the imperfections of the uninspired teachers and believers of the gospel'.¹⁸ For Gibbon, all historical evidence is subject to analysis, but Robertson accepts Biblical evidence as final, and

¹⁶ Phillipson, 'Providence', p. 73.

¹⁷ Voltaire, *Philosophical Dictionary*, ed. and trans. by Theodore Besterman, (London, 1972), pp. 215-228, 317-321.

¹⁸ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, I, p. 446.

even superior. He describes Ezekiel's description of Tyre as 'the most particular account [...] that is to be found in any ancient writer' (*I*: 292).

The antiquity of India undoubtedly posed problems for Christian views of history. It enabled Voltaire to point out that 'The Phoenicians, the Chaldeans, the Indians [...] had a theology before the Jewish horde inhabited the deserts of Horeb and Sinai'.¹⁹ Robertson, however, did not revise his Biblical stance in the light of new discoveries. This is evident in his relations with the geologist James Hutton. Smitten associates these with *India* in suggesting that Robertson had doubts about the Christian account. *India*, he states, 'hints at an extension of perspective in human history comparable to that which Hutton was proposing for geology. If the great achievements of Indian civilization [...] antedate those of the West, then the whole chronological state of world history has to be rethought'.²⁰ However, Hindu antiquity did not make Robertson doubt the Mosaic record. Instead, he simply states that 'our information concerning Indian chronology is [...] as uncertain as the whole system of it is wild and fabulous' (*I*: 380). He suggests that when more information is available, 'we may be able to reconcile their chronology to the true method of computing time, founded on the Old Testament' (*I*: 380-381). There is no question of the Biblical account being revised; it is the Hindu system that must be accommodated to the Old Testament. Robertson shows similar views in his relations with Hutton. The geologist sent Robertson the preface to his *Theory of the Earth*, prior to publication.²¹ Robertson's reaction was to revise it so as to make it 'more Theological'.²² Hutton eventually published his book without a preface, but both versions of it are still extant,

¹⁹ Voltaire, *Dictionary*, pp. 219-220.

²⁰ Smitten, 'Introduction', p. xlviii.

²¹ Dennis R. Dean, 'James Hutton on Religion and Geology: the Unpublished Preface to his *Theory of the Earth*, (1788), *Annals of Science*, 32 (1975), 187-193 (p. 191).

²² Robertson to James Hutton, 22/7/?, in Dean, p. 192.

and they differ strongly. Hutton calls the Old Testament ‘the Jewish history of mankind’.²³ This resembles Voltaire’s description of it as ‘history written by the Jews’.²⁴ Such descriptions deprive scripture of its universal application. Robertson changed Hutton’s words to ‘the sacred writings’.²⁵ He also excised Hutton’s statement that natural philosophy and revelation have equal authority.²⁶ Robertson’s views concerning chronology and related matters, in short, suggest the Presbyterian rather than the ‘enlightened’, Voltairean philosopher.

Robertson’s own view of current Indian events is uncertain—he does not explicitly criticize any *specific* British behaviour in *India*, possibly due to the family connections mentioned above.²⁷ It is significant, however, that those who were critical of British conduct in India felt Robertson to be on their side. As early as 1777, Dames Barrington, after reading *America*, wrote to Robertson that ‘it makes me wish you to be the Historian of our late conquests in the East Indies, where so much hath been done against more civilized natives [...] with a handful of European banditti, for the forces of the East India Company scarcely deserve a better name’.²⁸ When *India* appeared, Robertson received a poem on the subject from Samuel Martin, a Scottish Presbyterian minister. Martin had evangelical tendencies; as Carnall says, he wanted Robertson to encourage the Christianizing of India. Robertson does not deal with this subject, apart from a brief statement that both Catholic and Protestant attempts to convert the Hindus have been unsuccessful (*I*: 336). However, as Carnall also notes, Martin also ‘vehemently endorsed the impeachment of Warren Hastings’.²⁹

²³ Hutton’s preface, in Dean, pp. 189–190 (p. 190).

²⁴ Voltaire, *Dictionary*, p. 217.

²⁵ William Robertson, ‘Two Items intended for Publication by James Hutton’, in *MWC*, pp. 161–171 (p. 171).

²⁶ Hutton’s preface, in Dean, p. 190.

²⁷ See above, p. 294.

²⁸ Barrington to Robertson, 12/6/1777, *R-McD*, MS 3943, f. 21, NLS.

²⁹ Carnall, ‘Robertson and India’, p. 218.

Carnall confines his quotation of Martin's poem to the sections exhorting Robertson to encourage Christianity in India.³⁰ Another section, however, makes it clear that Martin felt that Robertson was the right man to attack Indian evils:

To this we call the, Xavier to become
Be first Las Casas, and reform at home [...]
Beat down their Batteries, and every Hold
Form'd and maintain'd by lawless Lust of Gold
And let thy Thunders fall, by Names unaw'd
On Men of Blood, and Treachery, and Fraud
Of Europe the Refuse and the Disgrace
The vile Oppressors of the Indian Race.³¹

The spirit of this verse is very similar to that of Buchanan's anti-Portuguese poem written two centuries previously.³² That it should be written by an eighteenth-century Scottish Presbyterian minister suggests that 'Scottish' views of empire had a strong endurance. It is also plain that Martin feels Robertson to be a kindred spirit. The comparison with Las Casas, whom Robertson is held to have denigrated, is significant. Also important is the fact that Scots were particularly sensitive to Robertson's message. A Scot in Madras praises Robertson for 'calling forth an humane attention in the English Sovereigns to their [...] subjects in this Country'.³³ By specifying *English* rulers, this writer distances himself from British Indian policy. Another Indian Scot commends Robertson for pointing out the 'contemptuous opinion of the natives, founded on supposed inferiority' responsible for the 'flagrant injustice which the natives often meet with from Europeans'.³⁴ Again it is a Scot who notices that 'imperial' contempt which Robertson notices in all his works. However, the Scot whose opinion on India really mattered was unimpressed. Fry has suggested that

³⁰ Carnall, 'Robertson and India', p. 218.

³¹ Samuel Martin, 'To the Reverend William Robertson, D.D, on perusing his Historical Disquisition concerning Ancient India', *R-McD*, MS 3944, f. 98, NLS.

³² See above, p. 211.

³³ A. Ross to Robertson, 9/7/1792, *R-McD*, MS 3944, f. 106, NLS.

³⁴ Patrick Russell to Robertson, 1/8/1792, *R-McD*, MS 3944, f. 113, NLS.

Henry Dundas may have been influenced by Robertson's work in his own Indian views.³⁵ However, this does not seem to be the case. Writing to Robertson, he states that 'I like all these Disquisitions as matters of entertainment and curiosity, but as to practical government it is a matter of perfect indifference what were the Ancient Customs respecting [...] India'.³⁶ Dundas was a pragmatic politician, not to be influenced by books.

The appendix discussing Indian culture and institutions, which makes up almost half the work, is particularly important in *India*. However, it is also possible to find definite evidence of Robertson's views in the first section, a general survey of Western contact with India up to the sixteenth century. It is in this section that Robertson criticizes the importance attached by history to empire building, in a way which leaves no doubt as to his own view of the subject: 'the exploits of conquerors who have desolated the earth, and the freaks of tyrants who have rendered the nations unhappy, are recorded with minute and often disgusting accuracy' (*I*: 50-51). When describing the various states that have communicated with India, Robertson shows a definite preference for small, non-expansionist and often republican states over large expansionist empires ruled by absolute monarchs, for which he already expresses his dislike when discussing Spain in *America*. The one exception is Robertson's admiration for Alexander the Great. He has, according to Robertson, all the characteristics of a stage despot, 'wild sallies of passion [...] and the ostentatious displays of vanity' (*I*: 13). Nonetheless, Robertson admires him as a man of vision. The admiration is not directed, however, at Alexander as conqueror, who is carefully differentiated from the Alexander whom Robertson admires: 'amidst the rage of conquest, he never lost sight of his pacific and commercial schemes' (*I*: 18). The use

³⁵ Fry, 'Commercial Empire', p. 60.

³⁶ Henry Dundas to Robertson, 27/6/1791, *R-McD*, MS 3944, f. 66, NLS.

of 'rage' to describe conquest makes it obvious that Robertson sees it as a destructive force, both physically and morally. The Alexander whom Robertson admires is the one concerned with extending commercial contact to new lands. Significantly, he is made aware of the importance of Eastern trade by the resistance made to him in his role as conqueror, by the free city-republic of Tyre, 'the wonderful efforts of the Tyrians in their own defence, when left without any ally or protector' (*I*: 13). Because of this, Alexander 'conceived a high opinion [...] of the wealth to be derived from commerce, especially [...] with India' (*I*: 13). The admiration for free city republics, based on 'public spirit' and trade, is one which Robertson frequently expresses in *India*.

Even as an imperialist, Alexander is highly unusual in the way he runs his new empire. His is unique in being devoid of that 'imperial' contempt which Robertson sees as characteristic of dominating rulers in their view of the 'inferior'. The Greeks, Robertson notes, possessed this contempt in full measure. The Greeks 'gave the degrading appellation of Barbarians' to all other peoples, and 'asserted a right of dominion over them in the same manner [...] as the soul has over the body, and men over irrational animals' (*I*: 25). Robertson observes that this doctrine 'found admission, to the disgrace of ancient philosophy, into all the schools. Aristotle [...] advised Alexander to govern the Greeks as subjects and the Barbarians as slaves' (*I*: 25). This is the Aristotelian doctrine of 'natural slavery', used by Major and the Spaniards.³⁷ Burke also criticizes the doctrine in his Hastings speeches, and such criticism is again consistent with Irish historical experience.³⁸ Robertson observes that Alexander has 'more enlarged' views, and notes approvingly how he marries a Persian

³⁷ See above, pp. 209-210.

³⁸ Burke, *Writings and Speeches*, VII, p. 70.

princess, encourages intermarriage generally, and promotes cultural exchange between Greeks and Persians (*I*: 26). However, Alexander is very much an exception to the 'imperial' rule; his ideas are 'repugnant to the [...] prejudices of his countrymen' (*I*: 25). Robertson's approval of some aspects of Alexander's policy cannot be taken as an approval of empire in general, as most of his writing confirms.

Robertson returns to disapproval when discussing imperial Rome and its contact with the East. Imperial Rome is corrupt, as a result of its imperial endeavours. Rome is 'enriched with the spoils and tribute of almost all the known world', and its citizens 'acquired a taste for luxuries of every kind' (*I*: 47). It is 'among people of this description' that 'the productions of India have always been held in the highest estimation' (*I*: 47). The capital of 'the greatest empire ever established in Europe' is filled with citizens who had now no occupation but to [...] dissipate the wealth accumulated by their ancestors' and who 'demanded everything elegant, rare or costly' (*I*: 47). The result is increased demand for Indian goods, because, as Robertson says, 'In every age, it has been a commerce of luxury, rather than of necessity which has been carried on between Europe and India' (*I*: 54). As the Romans 'had acquired all the fantastic tastes formed by the caprice and extravagance of wealth', it is unsurprising that they demand more Indian goods (*I*: 55). Spices and aromatics are the main requirements. These are used in religious ceremonies, but 'the vanity of men occasioned a greater consumption of these fragrant substances than their piety [...] they deemed it a display of magnificence to cover not only the body, but the funeral pile on which it is laid' (*I*: 55-56). There is a suggestion here of Presbyterian disapproval for elaborate religious ceremonies, usually involving incense, which have

Popish implications. One of Robertson's chief criticisms of the pre-Reformation Church is its early imitation of pagan religious ceremonial.³⁹

Gemstones, which Robertson notes 'have no pretensions to be of any real use', are also much in demand at Rome (*I*: 57). 'Among nations far advanced in luxury', gemstones 'are deemed not only ornaments, but marks of distinction, so that 'the vain and opulent vie [...] eagerly with one another for the possession of them' (*I*: 57). Pearls are particularly prized by the Romans; these 'were found not only in India but in many different countries, and all were ransacked in order to gratify the pride of Rome' (*I*: 58). Robertson again invokes greed, plunder and arrogance, features which he finds inseparable from empire. The third main item wanted by Rome from the East is silk, which is 'held in estimation by luxurious people' (*I*: 59). Robertson calls silk 'effeminate garb' only introduced as male wear during the reign of 'the dissolute Elagabalus' (*I*: 59). Absent from Robertson's description of Rome, with its comments on luxury and vanity, is the assertion, often found in the eighteenth century, that luxury and its related effects are ultimately beneficial to prosperity. This is cynically put by Bernard Mandeville, and O'Brien notes that Mandeville was a nagging problem for eighteenth-century Scottish writers (*NE*: 149).⁴⁰ The problem seems more acute, however, for writers like Smith and Hume whose 'British' and 'cosmopolitan' orientations cause them to express views close to Mandeville's, while simultaneously not wishing to be seen as doing so. Both Hume and Smith criticize Mandeville's views.⁴¹ However, both Hume and Smith also state that luxury and its pursuit are beneficial in encouraging industry and sociability.⁴² Hume even denies that luxury

³⁹ See above, p. 133.

⁴⁰ Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, ed. by Phillip Harth, (London, 1989), pp. 133-169.

⁴¹ David Hume, 'Of Refinement in the Arts', in *Essays*, pp. 268-280 (p. 280); Smith, *Theory*, pp. 306-314.

⁴² Hume, 'Refinement', pp. 270-271; Smith, *Theory*, pp. 179-187.

played a part in Roman decline.⁴³ Gibbon, similarly, concludes that Eastern luxury did Rome no harm in itself.⁴⁴ Voltaire criticizes Louis XIV's minister Le Pelletier who 'proposed to cut down luxuries, which [...] is to cut down industry and the circulation of money'.⁴⁵

Robertson's views suggests Fletcher's, rather than Smith's or Hume's: 'Rome [...] disturbed her neighbours for seven hundred years, and, after the conquest of almost all the known world, was corrupted by excess of riches and power'.⁴⁶ Robertson's position is clarified by his statement in the *Progress* that Rome became 'sunk in the softness of eastern luxury' and 'trembled at the approach of danger' (C I: 9). Robertson also states in the *Progress* that the Roman empire, 'like all great empires, degraded and debased the human species' (C I: 5). The implications of this remark alone cast doubt on Robertson as a 'spokesman for empire', and it is surprising to find such statements in a 'conjectural' section of Robertson's work. It is in these sections that he generally inclines more to 'cosmopolitan' or 'British' views. However, such remarks made in a discussion of the Roman empire were perhaps 'safe' because of the remoteness of the context.

However, Robertson does not find wealth acquired by overseas contact uniformly debilitating. He admires Palmyra, whose 'government was of the form which is best suited to a commercial city, republican' and which 'by the spirit of its inhabitants [...] long maintained its independence, though surrounded by powerful and ambitious neighbours' (I: 48). Palmyra is characterized by free government and patriotic 'public spirit', and therefore appeals to Robertson's 'Scottish' principles. The strength of its 'public spirit' enables it even to resist the overbearing imperial state of

⁴³ Hume, 'Refinement', p. 276.

⁴⁴ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, I, pp. 80-82.

⁴⁵ Voltaire, *Louis XIV*, p. 344.

⁴⁶ Fletcher, 'Conversation', p. 202.

Rome: 'when Syria submitted to the invincible arms of Rome, Palmyra continued upwards of two centuries a free state' (*I*: 49). As Palmyra possessed little territory, Robertson concludes that its wealth and power came from Eastern trade (*I*: 50). In the case of a free state, such wealth strengthens 'public spirit' rather than corrupting it, as in imperial Rome. A similar view is taken of Venice, an aristocratic republic. The wealth acquired by Venice from its Eastern trade does not destroy its 'public spirit'. In a note, Robertson describes how the Venetians, during wartime, raised money 'in a [...] public-spirited effort of the citizens, in order to support their country' (*I*: 345). When Venice is threatened by Genoa, 'the citizens, by a voluntary contribution, enabled the senate to fit out such a powerful armament as saved their country' (*I*: 345). Robertson's preference for Venice or Palmyra over imperial states like Spain or Rome is consistent with the 'Scottish' position. Williamson notes how Buchanan rejected the Constantinian 'imperial' model of statehood, preferring a 'model derived from antique Sparta or modern Venice'.⁴⁷ In Buchanan's *De Jure*, which is cast as a dialogue, Buchanan's interlocutor calls Buchanan 'profuse in your praise of the [...] government of Venice'.⁴⁸

Robertson's description of Roman luxury trade with India may contain a warning to Britain and other modern 'imperial' states. He points out that 'it continues still to be chiefly a commerce of luxury that is carried on with India' (*I*: 64). The consequences of eastern luxury in Rome, a territorial empire, may have some significance regarding possible consequences to Britain, which also imports luxuries and has recently acquired territory in India. Robertson notes 'a growing taste for Asiatic luxuries [...] in every state in Europe' (*I*: 176).

⁴⁷ Williamson, 'Scots, Indians', p. 76.

⁴⁸ Buchanan, *Powers*, p. 57.

Robertson's 'Scottish' view of conquest and empire influences his view of Eastern religions. According to Edward Said, Europeans have always taken a uniformly negative view of Islam: 'for Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma'. Said also believes that Europeans lumped 'Orientals' together as a homogenous entity, who were uniformly seen as passive, fatalistic, and incapable of understanding proper principles of government.⁴⁹ Such views can feasibly be attributed to later writers on India, like James Mill, who believes that Britain is 'charged with the government of India' because Indians cannot rule themselves, but Robertson is a different matter.⁵⁰ His views on Islam are selective, and this is the result, apparently, of his 'Scottish' convictions. Robertson's view of Muslims as *conquerors*, a role in which they frequently appear, is negative. It is this attitude he expresses in a letter to the British ambassador in Vienna, referring to renewed war between the Empire and the Turks: 'as a Divine [...] I pray and wish for the downfall of Mahomet. These barbarians have long enough occupied [...] Egypt, Assyria and Greece'.⁵¹ In *India*, Robertson ends his survey of Western contact with the East with the description of the sixteenth-century defeat of the Ottoman naval forces by the Portuguese (*I*: 189-193). It is to this that 'Europe has been indebted for its preservation from the most illiberal and humiliating servitude that ever oppressed polished nations' (*I*: 189). The Turkish Sultan equips a formidable naval force, but 'The Portuguese, by efforts of valour and constancy [...] repulsed this powerful armament' (*I*: 191). Had the Turks succeeded in driving Portugal out of the East, they would have gained control of the monopoly of eastern trade, and 'this 'must have brought an accession of force to an empire already formidable to mankind, that would have rendered it altogether irresistible. Europe [...]

⁴⁹ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New York, 1978), pp. 59, 98-107.

⁵⁰ James Mill, *History of British India*, ed. by Horace Hyman Wilson, 4th edn, 9 vols (London, 1840), II, pp. 152-153.

⁵¹ Robertson to Keith, 6/2/1788, *Hardwicke Papers*, Add. MS 35540, BL.

was not in a condition to have defended itself against the combined exertions of such naval and military power, supported by commercial wealth' (*I*: 192). However, 'happily for the human race, the despotic system of Turkish government [...] was prevented from extending its dominion over Europe, and from suppressing liberty' (*I*: 192-193). Robertson ends his account of Western contact with India at this dramatic point, which suggests that he sees the Turkish defeat as the culmination of his historical survey. Once again, the 'Scottish' suspicion of conquest and large territorial empires is clearly evident. Robertson appears to prefer the days before Mohammed, when 'the Arabians, satisfied from the earliest times with national independence and personal liberty, tended their camels, or reared their palm trees within the precincts of their own peninsula' (*I*: 98-99). However, even after Mohammed's advent, Robertson still praises Muslims as 'enterprising merchants' when they are engaged in peaceful trade (*I*: 100). It is only Muslims as conquerors to whom he objects. Furthermore, Robertson's 'Scottish' Presbyterian instincts cause him to see a positive feature in Islam, which he notes in the *Progress*. Islam prevents the Turkish Sultan from being completely arbitrary. Turkish government, states Robertson 'may properly be termed a despotism' (*C I*: 176). However, 'Wherever religion interposes, the will of the sovereign must submit to its decrees. When the Koran hath prescribed [...] the command of the Sultan cannot overturn that which a higher authority hath established' (*C I*: 177). This is not, as Robertson notes much of a restriction in practice, but the principle is plainly a good one (*C I*: 287). This principle is, of course, embedded in Presbyterian thought. Knox's views on monarchs who transgress Divine ordinance are very clear.⁵²

⁵² See above, pp. 134, 184-185.

Robertson's Protestant Presbyterian views on Catholicism also give him what appears to be sympathy for Muslims in their relations with pre-Reformation Christianity. His description of what Muslims see as Christian faults is revealing: 'as all nations which professed the Christian faith [...] mingled the worship of angels and saints with that of the supreme Being, and had absorbed their churches with pictures and statues, the true Muslims [...] beheld Christians of every denomination with abhorrence as idolators' (*I*: 110-111). Robertson does not criticize this Muslim view. This is unsurprising, as these Muslim criticisms of pre-Reformation Christianity are also Protestant criticisms of Catholicism, expressed by Robertson himself.⁵³

Robertson's hostility to Catholicism is still evident in *India*. He attacks Catholic missionaries who 'affected to imitate the dress and manner [...] of the Brahmins, and refused to associate with the Pariars, or admit them to the participation of the sacraments' (*I*: 336). This contemptuous attitude to the Untouchables is, as Robertson points out, 'inconsistent with the spirit and precepts of the Christian religion' (*I*: 336).

Far from wholly condemning Islam, as Said suggests Europeans always do, Robertson's view of it varies according to how it affects his 'Scottish' sensibilities. However, it is fair to say that, of the two major Eastern religions, Robertson prefers Hinduism. Robertson's appendix to *India* is essentially a discussion of *Hindu India*, and is so favourable that the *Gentleman's Magazine* called it 'too highly embellished'.⁵⁴ Jane Rendall points out that 'the Scottish view of the history and contemporary condition of Indian societies was a distinctive one', which is true enough, but she believes that this distinctiveness is due to 'stadial' views, so that the importance of oriental societies to Scots was 'their universal relevance to the history

⁵³ See above, pp. 131, 133.

⁵⁴ Review of *India*, *Gentleman's Magazine*, 61 (Jul-Dec, 1791), 931-936 (p. 935).

of civil society'. However, Rendall herself points out the weakness of this argument as it applies to Robertson. The 'stadial' approach 'could provide a rationale for assumptions of intrinsic Western European superiority, since Western Europe was assumed to be at the top of the ladder'. Robertson, as Rendall notes, wanted to 'redress this attitude, rather than confirm it'.⁵⁵ As J.L. Brockington points out, Robertson's work is one 'explicitly rejecting the attitude of European supremacy'.⁵⁶ This is incompatible with the tacit assumptions of 'stadial' history, and Robertson does not judge Hindu India by 'stadial' standards. This is noticed by James Mill, who continually criticizes Robertson's favourable views of India. He points out that the Hindus are, like the Amerindians in Book IV of *America*, a feeble people, and that Hindu civilization is essentially in the same state as the Aztec and Inca ones described in Book VII.⁵⁷ Robertson, in considering India, abandons 'stadial' conventions. The distinctiveness of Scottish views on India—in Robertson's case at any rate—is in how he judges India according to the 'Scottish' convictions that appear in all his works. Accordingly, he approves of Hinduism because, unlike Islam, it has never been a conquering faith. Furthermore (like Presbyterianism in Scotland), it gives India a powerful resilience to anything imposed by foreign domination: 'neither the ferocious violence [...] of its Mohammedan conquerors, nor the power of its European masters have affected any considerable alteration' (*I*: 202). Robertson's association of Europeans with Muslims as foreign dominators of India might be another veiled criticism of British Indian policy, Britain being the most prominent European power involved in India in 1791. Robertson's 'Scottishness' also conditions his view of the Hindu caste system, which provides a religious check on royal power. Hindu

⁵⁵ Jane Rendall, 'Scottish Orientalism from Robertson to James Mill', *Historical Journal*, 25 (1982), 43-69 (pp. 44, 59).

⁵⁶ J.L. Brockington, 'Warren Hastings and Orientalism', in *Impeachment*, pp. 91-108 (p. 103).

⁵⁷ Mill, I, pp. 327-328, 478; II, pp. 33, 161.

monarchs come from the second, warrior caste, and are therefore considered inferior to the religious, Brahmin caste. Rulers 'behold among their subjects and order of men far superior to themselves in dignity' to whom 'they must look up with respect, and reverence them as ministers of religion' (*I*: 206). Robertson notes approvingly that 'it is the duty of sovereigns to consult them' and that 'their admonitions, and even their censures, must be received with submissive respect' (*I*: 206). Robertson also notes that historically, 'princes are mentioned, who, having [...] disregarded the remonstrances of the Brahmins, were deposed by their authority and put to death' (*I*: 206-207). There can be fewer instances of 'Presbyterian political theory' more clearly illustrated in practice, and Robertson's approval definitely suggests the 'hint of the [...] notions of John Knox' noticed by Carnall.⁵⁸ Robertson's insistence that Indian government is not despotic, because it is subject to religious checks, is significant, because it refutes an argument often used to justify British conduct in India. Hastings asserted that India had always been ruled despotically, in order to justify his own policy, an assertion indignantly refuted by Burke.⁵⁹ As Fry points out, this was also the view taken by Dundas, which contradicts his belief that Dundas and Robertson shared similar views on India.⁶⁰ James Mill saw Brahminical influence on government as wholly bad, and pointed out that it was in any case ineffectual; Indian government was undoubtedly despotic.⁶¹

It is consistent with Robertson's 'Scottishness' that, while he admires features of Hinduism that suggest Presbyterian attitudes, he condemns those which resemble Catholicism. When he speaks of the 'excruciating mortifications and penances of the faquirs', he uses language which, to the Protestant mind, suggests monks and hermits,

⁵⁸ Carnall, 'Robertson and India', p. 216.

⁵⁹ Burke, *Writings and Speeches*, VII, p. 107.

⁶⁰ Fry, *Dundas Despotism*, p. 115; see above, p. 311.

⁶¹ Mill, I, pp. 202-203, 220-222; II, pp. 186-187.

which in turn are features of Catholicism and pre-Reformation Christianity (*I*: 104). Likewise, although he approves of the caste system for its checks to monarchical power, he is also sympathetic to the lot of the Pariars or Untouchables, and other Hindus who have lost caste by some religious transgression. Loss of caste he describes as ‘a punishment [...] more severe than excommunication in the most triumphal period of papal power’ (*I*: 359).

There is nothing particularly ‘Scottish’ about Robertson’s detailed descriptions of various aspects of Indian culture, except inasmuch as the favourable depiction of them is meant as a reaction against the ‘imperial’ contempt held by dominating nations for those they dominate. Robertson regards the various aspects of Indian civilization as evidence that this civilization is by no means inferior. ‘From the improved state of the mechanic arts in India’ he notes ‘we conclude its inhabitants to have been highly civilized’ (*I*: 231). He also comments on ‘the early and extraordinary productions of their genius in the fine arts’ (*I*: 231). Robertson, it should be noticed, is not interested in literature and art for their own sakes. As we have seen, he takes no interest in such matters in his European histories. His discussion of such features, which he regards as admirably advanced in India is all part of his plan to present India as a civilization worthy of respect. Accordingly, he quotes a sample of Indian drama, and states that ‘from this specimen [...] every reader of good taste, I should imagine, will be satisfied, that it is only among people of polished manners and delicate sentiments that a composition so simple and correct could be produced’ (*I*: 239). Robertson also points out Indian advancement in other fields: ‘The attainments of the Indians in science furnish an additional proof of their early civilization’ (*I*: 240). Regarding ethical philosophy, Robertson praises Brahmins who taught that ‘Man [...] was formed not for speculation or indolence, but for action [...] The happiness of the society of which he is a member, the good of mankind are his ultimate and highest

objects' (*I*: 425). The existence of this philosophy shows that the 'doctrines of the Stoical school were taught in India many ages before the birth of Zeno' (*I*: 426). Stoic discourse, as Dwyer notes, had a definite appeal to eighteenth-century Scottish thought, but, as he also points out, Stoicism was regarded primarily as a guide to *private* virtue and conduct, as opposed to civic humanism, which dealt with *public* virtue.⁶² Robertson was not a speculative philosopher, and seems to conflate the two. His description of the Indian philosophy that he suggests resembles Stoicism, looks like a description of a guide to 'public spirit'. This is confirmed by his description of it as a 'manly, active philosophy [...] formed only for men of the most vigorous spirit' (*I*: 247). The fact that it is 'prescribed [...] to a race of people more eminent (as is generally supposed) for the gentleness of their disposition than for the elevation of their minds' is significant; it implies that what is 'generally supposed' about India is wrong.

Of course, there are certain aspects of Indian religion of which Robertson cannot approve. Hindu religious rituals he describes as 'scenes of indulgence too indecent to be described' (*I*: 267). However, he at once points out that Europeans are in no position to criticize; similar 'instances occur in the rites of Greek and Roman worship' (*I*: 267).

Robertson ends his work with a general criticism of European 'imperial' conduct and attitudes:

Men in every state of their career are so satisfied with the progress made by the community of which they are members that [...] they are apt to regard people whose condition is not similar with contempt, and even aversion. In African and America [...] in the pride of their superiority, Europeans thought themselves entitled to reduce the natives of the former to slavery and to exterminate the latter (*I*: 285).

⁶² Dwyer, *Virtuous Discourse*, pp. 46-51, 64

This is not the language of a 'spokesman for empire'. Robertson clearly blames European arrogance for the miseries imposed on non-European peoples. He goes on to warn that

Even in India, though far advanced beyond the other two quarters of the globe in their improvement, the colour of the inhabitants, their effeminate appearance, their unwarlike spirit, the wild extravagance of their religious tenets and ceremonies [...] confirmed Europeans in such an opinion of their own pre-eminence, that they have always treated them as an inferior race (*I*: 286).

The criticisms of Indian characteristics are, of course, European prejudices, not Robertson's opinions. His description of Indian civilization makes it plain that he does not see Indians as passive and effeminate, and that their religion is at least no more wild and extravagant than that of the Greeks and Romans.

The last paragraph of the work explains the point behind Robertson's description of India:

If I might presume to hope that the description which I have given of the manners and institutions of the people of India could contribute in the smallest degree [...] to render their character more respectable and their condition more happy, I shall close my literary labours, with the satisfaction of thinking that I have not lived or written in vain (*I*: 287).

This ending seems to refer not only to *India* but also to Robertson's whole literary career. *India* can be seen as the final word in a historiographical career which, by viewing history in different contexts from a 'Scottish' standpoint, has shown the evils of foreign domination and conquest, and attitudes associated with them. The general thrust of Robertson's message is that empire is not a force for good. Although he never openly suggests that its course can or should be reversed, it is plain that he believes that non-European peoples, and the Europeans who are barbarized and corrupted by conquest and the acquisition of empire, would have been better off had the 'imperial' process never begun.

Robertson may have been one of the last Scots to have felt this. As Scots became more involved in British 'imperial' enterprise, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the doubts about empire and the sympathy with its victims seems to lessen. Significantly, this is the period in which, arguably, Scots definitely become, for all matters of significance, 'Britons', while Scottish identity becomes politically empty, identified with a romanticized and sanitized highlandism, evident in the tartan effusion organized by Scott and others when George IV visited Scotland in the 1820's. Macaulay, (a thorough 'Briton' of Scottish provenance), noted in 1839 that 'of the ancient national feeling, there remains just enough to be ornamental and useful'.⁶³ Macaulay himself, of course, was a leading figure in insisting that Indians be Westernized. There may be a link between the disappearance of real 'Scottishness' and that of sympathy with the victims of empire. It is possible to identify a period of transition. Rendall identifies a group of late-eighteenth-early-nineteenth century Scots, mostly educated in Edinburgh (some while Robertson was Principal of the University), who were involved in India. This group admired Eastern societies. One, James Hamilton, defended Hindu institutions against European denigrators, and another, Vans Kennedy, attacked James Mill for his contemptuous view of Indian civilization, pointing out that he knew nothing about it at first hand. Mountstuart Elphinstone admired the independence of Afghan chiefs which checked despotism in their monarchs, and compared Afghanistan to feudal Scotland in this particular.⁶⁴ This shows a definite survival of 'Scottish' views about monarchy and government, which is particularly emphasized by Elphinstone's preference for Afghanistan over the court despotism of Persia.⁶⁵

⁶³ T.B. Macaulay, 'Gladstone on Church and State', in T.B. Macaulay, *Critical and Historical Essays contributed to the Edinburgh Review*, pp. 468-502 (p. 487).

⁶⁴ Rendall, pp. 45, 65, 67.

⁶⁵ Rendall, p. 66.

However, even in this period, there is a changing attitude. Elphinstone, together with other Indian Scots like John Malcolm and Thomas Munro, had no Robertsonian doubts about empire. They believed that the Indians needed firm, though benevolent, British government, and they all insisted that, as the East had always been ruled despotically, British rule must operate on similar lines, with the military playing a large role.⁶⁶ This, as Martha McLaren points out, is a very different view from Burke's.⁶⁷ It also, of course, disagrees with Robertson's, and inclines more to the views of Hastings and Dundas.

As Rendall shows, even the moderately sympathetic views of Scots like Elphinstone about Eastern civilization had little influence. The dominant voice of the early nineteenth century was that of James Mill, whose outlook was wholly 'British', firmly convinced that native India is hopeless and that Britain is duty-bound to Westernize it.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Martha McLaren, 'Philosophical History and the Ideology of the Company State: the Historical Works of John Malcolm and Mountstuart Elphinstone', *Indo-British Review*, 21 (1993), 130-143 (pp. 134, 136, 140); Douglas M. Peers, 'Soldiers, Scholars and the Scottish Enlightenment: Militarism in Early Nineteenth Century India', *International History Review*, 16 (1994), 441-465 (pp. 450, 451, 460).

⁶⁷ Martha McLaren, 'From Analysis to Prescription: Scottish Concepts of Asian Despotism in Early Nineteenth-Century British India', *International History Review*, 15 (1993), 469-501 (pp. 481-482).

⁶⁸ Rendall, pp. 68-69.

CONCLUSIONS

It is possible that the alternative view of Robertson presented in this thesis does nothing more than provide another illustration of the 'Caledonian antisyzygy', the principle which, as Fry says, states that 'whatever may be asserted of Scots, the opposite may be asserted with equal force and truth'.¹ However, examination of his often neglected narrative history suggests that prevailing views of Robertson, as 'cosmopolitan', 'British' and primarily 'conjectural' or 'stadial' in his historical outlook, are misleading and partial. At the least, the alternative view further confirms Allan's belief in the continuity between pre-Union Scottish historiography and that of the eighteenth century.

The older 'Scottish' attitudes to religion, government and empire are all strongly evident in Robertson's histories, but are often—particularly in the 'stadial' or 'conjectural' portions—played down, sometimes leading to downright contradiction between narrative and 'conjectural' and 'stadial' sections. I have suggested that this is due to complex political and literary concerns, which contribute to the ambivalence that surrounds Robertson. This ambivalence is furthered by the fact that there is very little evidence for Robertson's personal position. Hume and Gibbon wrote autobiographies, and left copious and informative correspondence. Robertson has left nothing that he can be described as autobiographical, and his correspondence, which is meagre and widely scattered compared to that of Gibbon and Hume, is largely that of a busy man who, by his own account, disliked writing letters.² A great deal of further evidence is second-hand, largely what Robertson's contemporaries said about him. In the end, the chief source for the student is Robertson's histories, which are themselves ambivalent. Yet, the ambivalence in Robertson's life and works may itself be a partial

¹ Fry, *Dundas Despotism*, p. 383.

² Robertson to Smith, 8/4/1776, in *Correspondence*, p. 192.

symptom of the endurance of 'Scottish' values. The main reason behind the Moderate political arrangement, for Robertson, appears to have been the strengthening and survival of a thoroughly 'Scottish' institution—the Presbyterian church—as an independent and vital force in a changing world. As William Ferguson says, 'the Moderates were essential to the maintenance of Presbyterianism in Scotland'.³ The fact that the world was changing made it necessary to support features to which, in themselves, Robertson was not wholly committed, like patronage, compromise with government and a 'polite' worldliness in ministers. To assure the survival of 'Scottish' Presbyterianism, some features of this 'Scottishness' had to be compromised, hence the continuing ambiguities about issues like America and Catholicism, authority and liberty, and the adoption of the tactics of Tacitus, which, considering the importance of Tacitus to 'Scottish' historical views, again suggests an allegiance to 'Scottishness'. This ambiguity needs further study—not as the 'schizophrenia' of Daiches of the 'inferiorism' of Beveridge and Turnbull, but as what might be a pragmatic realization of the need for compromise, without the renunciation of 'Scottish' values.⁴ This would be particularly relevant to figures like Robertson who played significant political roles. Ferguson is a good example. In his *Essay* he takes a stand on the 'Scottish' conception of 'public spirit' and active liberty, and stresses the importance of the 'noise of dissension which generally accompany the exercise of freedom'.⁵ However, when the 'noise of dissension' broke out in America, Ferguson condemned it in a pamphlet directed at the pro-American Richard Price, and insisted, as Sher points out, that liberty did not mean participation and autonomy, but security, as guaranteed under the British status quo. From the 'Scottish' and 'civic humanist' view of liberty in the

³ William Ferguson, *Scotland, 1689 to the Present*, (Edinburgh and London, 1969), p. 227.

⁴ See above, pp. 17-18.

⁵ See above, p. 163.

Essay, Ferguson moves to the passive 'British' and 'jurisprudential' one in his American pamphlet. Significantly, as Sher says, Ferguson was commissioned by government to write this pamphlet.⁶ As with Robertson, there is evident conflict between personal allegiance to 'Scottish' values and political commitment to 'British' ones, required of Ferguson as a Moderate.

Robertson was also influenced by purely personal considerations of wealth and prestige, which may contribute to the ambivalence of his writing and partially explain his ventures into 'conjectural' or 'stadial' history. That Robertson may only have written this sort of history because of such considerations raises questions about his commitment to it, and indeed about the importance of 'stadial' history to eighteenth-century Scotland as a whole. As long as scholars continue to fixate upon 'stadial' writing, a distorted picture of eighteenth-century Scottish historiography will be presented, such as that offered in John Kenyon's statement that eighteenth century Scotland saw 'a marked reaction against narrative or biographical history'.⁷ Many eighteenth-century Scottish historians wrote both types of history, but one variety has been regarded as the most important. Numerous eighteenth-century Scottish narrative histories have been almost completely ignored. Ferguson's lengthy history of the Roman republic is an example, as is Sir John Dalrymple's history of Restoration Britain. Similarly ignored have been the narrative histories of William Guthrie, John Pinkerton, Thomas Somerville and Philip Watson, the last two of whom were encouraged and influenced by Robertson. Many of these writers dealt with significant topics. Somerville wrote on late seventeenth-early eighteenth-century British history, a period including the Union. Watson took up Spanish history where Robertson left off,

⁶ Sher, *Church*, pp. 264, 265-266.

⁷ John Kenyon, *The History Men: The Historical Profession in England since the Renaissance*, 2nd edn, (London, 1993), p. 60.

describing the reigns of Phillip II and Philip III.⁸ The views of a Scottish Presbyterian minister like Watson on despotic and ultra-Catholic Spain would be worthy of consideration. The importance of narrative history in eighteenth-century Scotland needs to be asserted, if only to rescue eighteenth-century Scottish historiography from the charge of superficiality. William Ferguson criticizes the Scottish Enlightenment because it 'treated history as a mere historical premiss'.⁹ This is a valid statement regarding 'stadial' history, which reduces history to a formula for analyzing progress, according to a fixed set of conventions and assumptions. As long as eighteenth-century Scottish historiography is considered to be primarily 'stadial' or 'conjectural', William Ferguson's view must stand. Furthermore, the 'progressiveness' of 'stadial' history will continue to strengthen views about the abandonment of the 'Scottish' past for a progressively 'improving' 'cosmopolitan' or 'British' future. The endurance of 'Scottish' values in Robertson's narrative history suggests that the abandonment of the 'Scottish' past postulated by Kidd and O'Brien cannot be wholly applicable. The further examination of eighteenth-century Scottish narrative history might bring to light further convincing arguments against such views, although 'Scottish' values might be expected to lessen in succeeding generations of historians, as 'Britishness' gains a firmer hold and independent Scotland recedes further into the past.¹⁰

The alternative view of Robertson raises doubts about 'cosmopolitanism', but only in the sense in which this concept is interpreted by scholars who emphasize the links between Robertson and Voltaire, Hume and Gibbon. It does not suggest that Scottish historiography must be considered in a wholly isolationist way. 'Scottish' values themselves have analogues in other countries. No one could deny the link

⁸ D.B. Horn, 'Some Scottish Writers of History in the Eighteenth Century', *Scottish Historical Review*, 49 (1961), 1-18) pp. 4-7, 15).

⁹ William Ferguson, *Identity*, p. 207.

¹⁰ See above, p. 25.

between Knox and Calvin, for example. 'Scottish' Calvinist political thought has, as I have pointed out, resemblances to German Lutheran political thought.¹¹ German views of patriotism and liberty are also similar; as Fania Oz-Salzburger points out, Tacitus praised the Germans as well as the Caledonians, and Germany also had historians who, like Buchanan, wrote histories 'aimed at promoting a sense of proud defiance'.¹² The difference is, of course, that German patriotism made the transition from defensiveness to aggression, with disastrous consequences. Robertson, in his discussion of German events during the Reformation, clearly saw resemblances between German and Scottish experience, and this led him to sympathize with those aspects of German history which appealed to his own 'Scottish' perceptions: defensive patriotism, Protestantism and the fight against despotism and Popery. There is no suggestion that he saw such features as unique to Scotland, which in a sense, makes him cosmopolitan, but it is a 'Scottish' cosmopolitanism. His own 'Scottish' values naturally led him to look for, and identify with, analogous values and experiences in other contexts. There is little to suggest a 'cosmopolitan' abandonment of a national for a pan-European perception of history, as suggested by O'Brien.¹³ There is still less to make him 'cosmopolitan' in the narrowly 'school of Voltaire' sense. It may be possible to construct an alternative 'cosmopolitanism' that still remains essentially national. Instead of Scottish writers abandoning 'Scottish' values and adopting those of England or France, it ought to be possible to see them extending 'Scottish' values to the consideration of other histories. This would make them 'cosmopolitan' in that they do not confine their attention to their own country, but it would also emphasize that they viewed all history from a 'Scottish' perspective, rather than from one which was

¹¹ See above, p. 187.

¹² Fania Oz-Salzburger, 'National Identity in Scotland and Germany in the Late Eighteenth Century', *Ideas, Inquiries, Aesthetics*, 2 (1996), 137-166 (p. 145).

¹³ See above, pp. 13-14.

'British' or 'cosmopolitan' in the Voltairean sense. Basically, if Scottish writers are to be called 'cosmopolitan' the interpretation of the term must be widened, so that it need not mean an abandonment of 'Scottish' values or an overwhelming debt to Montesquieu and Voltaire.

I have paid particular attention to Robertson's work on 'imperial' history. This is partly because *America* (if the unfinished British portion is included), is the most substantial portion of Robertson's work, but also, as I have tried to show, because there appears to be a link between dubiety about empire and 'Scottish' values, of which that dubiety seems a logical outgrowth. This argument raises questions about whether Robertson was truly a 'spokesman for empire', because it suggests that it would be very difficult for a historian influenced by 'Scottish' values to embrace empire wholeheartedly. The 'spokesman' view, which springs from the belief in commitment to 'Britishness' and a 'stadial' view of history, may need to be challenged, not only in Robertson's case, but in that of eighteenth-century Scottish historians generally. In fact, the whole question of Scots and empire is an area awaiting further, detailed, exploration. The pioneering work of Williamson on the sixteenth century, Armitage on Darien and Fry on eighteenth-century attitudes to empire has barely scratched the surface, although it should now be less feasible to lump Scottish and English writers on empire together under the heading British, as Pagden does.¹⁴ It may be true, as Fry says, that 'no crude contrast can be drawn between the imperial conduct of liberal, progressive Scots and reactionary, oppressive Englishmen'.¹⁵ However, it should be possible to distinguish a distinctively 'Scottish' position on empire, and Fry's use of terms like 'progressive' and 'reactionary' only obscures the issue. It is undoubtedly progressive, in 2001, to take a dubious view of

¹⁴ See above, pp. 209-211, 214, 220-221, 293.

¹⁵ Fry, 'Commercial Empire', p. 67.

empire and to sympathize with its victims, because to do so represents an abandonment of the pro-empire views of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, if eighteenth-century Scots like Robertson were dubious about empire, it was because they were *not* progressive. To be progressive in their time would mean to embrace 'Britishness' and Britain's empire. The suspicion of empire is found in Scots of the period, not because they were progressive, but because they were conservative, in the non-party-political sense of the word; they clung to older 'Scottish' values. Fry himself makes this point by linking eighteenth-century Scottish attitudes to Darien.¹⁶ This point is what I have tried to stress, not only in Robertson's writings about empire, but in all his writings and, to some extent, in his whole career. What Robertson's work on India and America suggests is that there is a distinctively 'Scottish' view of empire, and that this is the result of other 'Scottish' values concerning defensive patriotism, religion and liberty, which are in turn shaped by historical experience. This view is, as I have suggested, confirmed by a general examination of Scottish writings on empire.

Finally, the alternative view of Robertson suggests that there is a continued need to disaggregate the Scottish Enlightenment, and to move away from the tendency to judge it by its 'giants', Hume and Smith. The fact that these two stand head and shoulders above the rest in general perception does not make them typical. Hume was genuinely 'cosmopolitan' both in the broad sense and, arguably, in the 'school of Voltaire' *philosophe* one, while Smith was undoubtedly 'British' in his outlook and 'stadial' in his view on history, but their views are not the only ones found in eighteenth-century Scotland. The immense achievements and reputation of these two writers, however, must not be allowed to obscure 'lesser' and far more numerous figures like Robertson, and their views must not be taken as representative. As Allan

¹⁶ See above, p. 293.

points out, for example, it is highly misleading to take the secularism of Hume as typical of eighteenth-century Scottish thought (*VL*: 166).¹⁷

The alternative view of Robertson suggests that his outlook was 'Scottish' first and 'British', 'cosmopolitan' and 'stadial' only second, if at all. These eighteenth-century characteristics, in his history and career, may only have been adopted as part of a political and literary strategy, without reflecting any personal convictions. Despite Tacitean equivocations and ambivalence, the 'Scottish' values of the patriot, the Presbyterian minister and the anti-despotic Whig emerge in and influence all his works. The implications of an alternative, 'Scottish' view of Robertson for the continuing study of the Scottish Enlightenment and particularly of its historiography are numerous and complex. At the least, however, further study may lead to the emphasis being more firmly placed on 'Scottish' than 'Enlightenment', on continuity rather than change, and the possible end of the still enduring view that Scotland owes the achievements of the eighteenth century to external influence and the abandonment of the past.

¹⁷ Allan, 'Protestantism, Presbyterianism', p. 195.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1) Manuscript Sources

Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University

Letter from Robertson to Jean-Baptiste Suard, 10/8/1768

Bodleian Library, Oxford University

Montagu Papers, MS Montagu d.9

British Library

Birch Papers, Add. MS 4317

Egerton MSS, Eg 1970, Eg 2182

Hardwicke Papers, Add. MS 35350, 35511, 35531, 35534, 35540

Hone Papers, Add. MS 40856

Liverpool Papers, Add. MS 38200, 38206, 38308

Edinburgh University Library

General, Gen 873/1/89v, Gen 873/11/282-4, Gen 874/v/17-18, Gen 875/2/94F,
Gen 1429/16/4, Gen 1429/16/8, Gen 1732, Gen 1733/38, Gen 1733/51
E 90-105, E 95-83, E 96-46

Laing Collection, La II 241, La II 419/2, La II 419/8

Historical Society of Pennsylvania

Deer Collection: English Prose Writers

Gratz Collection: British Historians and Essayists, Case 10, Box 25

Hornby Library, Liverpool

Edward Gibbon Collection

Liverpool Record Office

Nicholson Family Papers, 920 Nic 9/15/1

Massachusetts Historical Society

Letter from Robertson to Tobias Smollet, 15/3/1759.

National Library of Scotland

Accessions, 8784, 10519
 Advocates' Library, Adv. MS 29.5.8(IV)
 Airth Papers, MS 10892
 Andrew Stuart Papers, MS 8256, 8257, 8262
 Carlyle Papers, MS 23764, 23765, 23920
 Dr John Lee, MS 3431
 Dr Robert Douglas, MS 3118
 Henry Mackenzie, MS 124, 646
 Hume and his Circle, MS 1005
 MacPhail Collection, MS 1036
 Minto Papers, MS 11008, 11009, 11010, 12980, 12984, 12999, 11144
 Montrose Papers, MS 3703
 Mure of Caldwell Papers, MS 4943, 5003
 Newhailes Papers, MS 25294, 25295, 23000, 25302, 25304, 25305
 Robertson-MacDonald Papers, MS 3942, 3943, 3944, 3953, 3954, 3958, 3965
 3980, 3988
 Saltoun Papers, MS 16684, 16693, 16707, 16711, 16521, 16717, 16726, 16740,
 16747, 17544
 Sir Robert Liston, MS 5521, 5547, 5549, 5554, 5560, 5567, 5569
 Watson Collection. MS 582, 583

New College Library, Edinburgh

General Assembly Library, Boxes 1.3.1, 1.3.3

Nothamptonshire Record Office

Correspondence, Ref. F(M)A.i.19

Pierpont Morgan Library, New York

Boswell and Johnson, II.p4, III.p409

Princeton University Library

John Wild Autograph Collection, C0047
 Letters C0078, C0140

Sheffield City Archives

Correspondence, Ref. WWM BKP 1/973

University College, London

Brougham Papers MS 48/141, 48/144, 48/147, 48/149, 48/150

William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan

Charles Townshend Papers, Bundles 295/3/21, 295/3/22

William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, South Carolina

William Robertson Papers, MS 4512

2) Printed SourcesA) Robertson's Works

Articles in *The Edinburgh Review*, 2nd edn, (London: Longman, 1818), pp. 1-8, 20-24, 51-53, 65-67, 69-70, 79-83, 83-86, 97-105.

'General Assembly Addresses', in *MWC*, pp. 115-121.

The History of America, 4 vols, (London: Sharpe and Son, 1820).

The History of the Reign of Charles V, with an Account of the Emperor's Life After his Abdication, by William H. Prescott, 2 vols, (London: Routledge, 1897).

The History of Scotland during the Reigns of Queen Mary and King James VI till his Accession to the Crown of England: with a Review of the Scottish History previous to that Period, 3 vols, (London: Sharpe and Son, 1820).

'Notes for a Fast day Sermon on the American Revolution', in *MWC*, pp. 139-142.

The Progress of Society in Europe, ed. by Gilbert, Felix, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1972).

'Reasons of Dissent in the Inverkeithing Case', in *MWC*, pp. 25-48.

'Sermon on the Centenary of the Glorious Revolution', in *MWC*, pp. 175-187.

'The Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance, and its Connexion with the Success of His Religion, considered; A Sermon, preached Before the Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, January 6, 1755', in *The History of Scotland during the Reigns of Queen Mary and James VI till his Accession to the Crown of England: with a Review of the Scottish History previous to that Period*, 3 vols, (London: Sharpe and Son, 1820), I, pp. xciii-cxxvi.

'Speech on Roman Catholic Relief', in *MWC*, pp.

The Works of William Robertson, 12 vols, (London: Cadell and Davies, 1817).'

- The Works of William Robertson*, 12 vols, (Edinburgh, 1819).
The Works of William Robertson, 11 vols, (Chiswick, 1824).
The Works of William Robertson, 12 vols, ed. by. Sher, Richard B and Smitten, Jeffrey, (London: Routledge/Thoemmes, 1996).
 'Two Items Intended for Publication by James Hutton', in *MWC*, pp. 162-171.

B) Biographies of Robertson

- Brougham, Henry, Lord, 'Robertson', in *Lives of Men of Letters and Science who flourished in the Time of George III*, 2 vols, (London: C. Knight and Co., 1845-1846), pp. 256-323.
 Davenport, Richard Alfred, 'A Sketch of the Life of Dr Robertson', in *The Works of William Robertson*, 12 vols, (Chiswick, 1824), I, pp. i-lxxii.
 Gleig, George, *Some Account of the Life and Writings of William Robertson, D.D., F.R.S.E.*, (Edinburgh, 1812).
 Robertson, Frederick Lockhart, 'Principal Robertson', in *Scottish Divines, St Giles Lectures*, 3rd series, (Edinburgh: Macniven and Wallace, 1883), pp. 189-224.
 Stewart, Alexander, 'The Life of Dr William Robertson', in William Robertson. *The History of Scotland during the reigns of Queen Mary and of King James VI till his Accession to the Crown of England: with a Review of the Scottish History previous to that Period*, 3 vols, (London: Sharpe and Son, 1820), I, pp. i-lxxxix.
 Stewart, Dugald, 'Account of the Life and Writings of William Robertson, D.D., F.R.S.E', in *The Works of William Robertson*, 12 vols, (London: Cadell and Davies, 1817), I, pp. 1-204.

C) Primary Sources: Books and Pamphlets

- The Acts of the Parliament of Scotland*, ed. by Thomson, T. et al., 11 vols (Edinburgh, 1814-1875).
 [Adam, William], *Sequel to the Gift of a Grandfather*, ([n.p.], 1839).
 Adams, John, *The Papers of John Adams*, ed. by Taylor, Robert J. et al., 10 vols to date, (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1977—).
 Beverley, Robert, *The History and Present State of Virginia*, ed. by Wright, Louis B., (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947).
 Boece, Hector, *The Chronicles of Scotland, translated into Scots by John Bellenden*, ed. by Chambers, R. W. et al., 2 vols, (Edinburgh and London: Scottish Text Society, 1938-1941),
 Boswell, James, *Boswell for the Defense, 1769-1774*, ed. by Wimsatt, W.K. and Pottle, F.A., (London: Heinemann, 1960).
 Boswell: the English Experiment, 1785-1789, ed. by Lustig, Irma S. and Pottle, F.A., (London: Heinemann, 1986).
 Boswell in Extremes, 1776-1778, ed. by Weiss, Charles McC. and Pottle, F.A., (London: McGraw-Hill, 1970).
 Boswell on the Grand Tour: Germany and Switzerland, 1764, ed. by Pottle, F.A., (London: Heinemann, 1953).
 Boswell, Laird of Auchinleck, 1778-1782, ed. by Reed, J.W, and Pottle, F.A., (London, New York and Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1977).
 Boswell's London Journal, ed. by Pottle, Frederick A., (London: Ace

Books, 1958).

The Correspondence of James Boswell, ed. by Hilles, Frederick W. et al., 8 vols to date, (London: Heinemann, 1966—).

The Life of Samuel Johnson, L.L.D., ed. by Roberts, Sir Sidney, 2 vols, (London: Heron Books, 1960).

[Borland, Francis], *Memoirs of Darien, Giving a Short Description of that Country, with an Account of the Attempts of the Company of Scotland To Settle a Colonie in that Place, With a Relation of some of the many Tragical Disasters which did attend that design; With some practical Reflections upon the Whole, Written mostly in the year 1700, while the Author was in the American Regions*, (Glasgow: Hugh Brown, 1705).

Brougham, Henry, Lord, *Lives of Men of Letters and Science who flourished in the Time of George III*, 2 vols, (London: C. Knight and Co., 1845-1846).

Buchanan, George, *The Powers of the Crown in Scotland*, ed. and trans. by Arrowood, Charles Flinn, (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1949).

The History of Scotland, 2 vols, (Edinburgh: Hamilton, Balfour and Neill, 1751-1752).

Burke, Edmund, *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke*, ed. by Copeland, Thomas W., 10 vols, (Cambridge: CUP, 1958-1978).

Reflections on the Revolution in France, ed. by O'Brien, Conor Cruise, (London: Penguin, 1986).

The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke, 12 vols, (London, F.C. and J. Rivington, 1808).

The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke, ed. by Langford, Paul et al., 9 vols to date, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981—).

Calderwood, David, *The History of the Kirk of Scotland*, ed. by Thomson, T., 8 vols, (Edinburgh: Wodrow Society, 1843-1849).

Calendar of State Papers: Colonial Series, America and West Indies, 1685-1688, preserved in the Public Record Office, ed. by Fortescue, J.W., (London, 1899).

Carlyle, Alexander, *Anecdotes and Characters of the Times*, ed. by Kinsley, James, (London: OUP, 1973).

[Carlyle, Alexander], *The Question Relating to a Scots Militia Considered in a Letter to the Lords and Gentlemen who have concerted the form of a Law for that Establishment, By a Freeholder*, (Edinburgh: Hamilton and Balfour, 1760).

Chalmers, George, *The Political Annals of the Present United Colonies, from their Settlement to the Peace of 1763*, (London: J. Bowen, 1780).

Cockburn, Henry, *Memorials of His Times*, ed. by Miller, Karl F.C., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974).

Cortes, Fernando, *Letters of Cortes to Charles V*, ed. by MacNutt, F.A., 2 vols, (New York and London: G.P. Putnam and Sons, 1908).

Craig of Riccarton, Thomas, *De Unione Regnorum Britanniae Tractatus*, ed. and trans. by Terry, C. Sanford, (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1909).

Defoe, Daniel, *The True-Born Englishman and Other Writings*, ed. by Furbank, P.N. and Owens, W.R., (London: Penguin, 1997).

Diaz de Castillo, *The Conquest of New Spain*, ed. and trans. by Cohen, J.M., (London: Penguin, 1963).

- Erskine of Carnock, John, *Journal of the Honourable John Erskine of Carnock*, ed. by MacLeod, Walter, (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1893).
- Ferguson, Adam, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, ed. by Forbes, Duncan, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1966).
- [Ferguson, Robert], *A Just and Modest Vindication of the Scots Design for the having Established a Colony at Darien*, ([n.p.], 1699).
- Fletcher of Saltoun, Andrew, *Political Works*, ed. by Robertson, John, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997).
- Garcilaso de la Vega, El Inca, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas and General History of Peru*, ed. and trans. by Livermore, Harold V., 2 vols, (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1966).
- Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, ed. and trans. by Thorpe, Lewis, (London: Penguin, 1966).
- Gibbon, Edward, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. by Womersley, David, 3 vols, (London: Penguin, 1995).
- The Letters of Edward Gibbon*, ed. by Norton, J.E., 3 vols, (London: Cassell and Co., 1956).
- Memoirs of my Life*, ed. by Radice, Betty, (London: Penguin, 1990).
- The Miscellaneous Works of Edward Gibbon*, ed. by Sheffield, Lord, 2nd edn, 5 vols, (London: John Murray, 1814).
- Harrington, James, *The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics*, ed. by Pocock, J.G.A., (Cambridge: CUP, 1992).
- Herrera, Antonio de, *The General History of the Vast Continent and Islands of America, Commonly called the West Indies: with the Best Accounts the People could give of their Antiquities, Collected from the Original Relations sent to the King of Spain*, ed. and trans. by Stevens, John, 2nd edn, 6 vols, (London: T. Longman, 1743).
- Hill, John, *An Account of the Life and Writings of Hugh Blair, D.D.*, (Philadelphia: James Humphreys, 1808).
- The History of Caledonia, or the Scots Colony in Darien, in the West Indies, With an Account of the Manners of the Inhabitants and Riches of the Country, By a Gentleman lately Arriv'd* (London: John Nutt, 1699).
- Hume, David, *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. by Miller, Eugene F., (Indianapolis: Liberty, 1985).
- The History of England from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution of 1688*, ed. by Todd, William B., 6 vols, (Indianapolis: Liberty, 1983).
- The History of Great Britain*, ed. by Forbes, Duncan, (London: Penguin, 1970).
- The Letters of David Hume*, ed. by Greig, J.Y.T., 2 vols, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932).
- New Letters of David Hume*, ed. by Klibansky, R. and Mossner, E.C., (Oxford: OUP, 1954).
- Hume of Godscroft, David, *The History of the House of Douglas*, ed. by Reid, David, 2 vols, (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1996).
- Hutcheson, Francis, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, 3rd edn, (London, 1729).
- A System of Moral Philosophy*, 2 vols, (London: Millar and Longman, 1755).
- Hutchinson, Thomas, *The History of the Colony and Province of*

- Massachusetts-Bay*, ed. by Mayo, Lawrence Shaw, 3 vols, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936).
- Innes, Thomas, *A Critical Essay on the Ancient Inhabitants of the Northern Parts of Britain, or Scotland*, ed. by Grub, George, (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1879).
- James VI and I, *Minor Prose Works of King James VI and I*, ed. by Craigie, James and Law, Alexander, (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1982).
- John of Fordun, *The Chronicle of the Scottish Nation*, ed. by Skene, William F., trans. by Skene, Felix J.H., (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872).
- Johnson, Samuel and Boswell, James, *Johnson's Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland and Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, L.L.D.*, ed. by Chapman, R.W., (Oxford: OUP, 1979).
- Kames, Henry Home, Lord, *Sketches of the History of Man*, 2 vols, (Edinburgh, 1774).
- Knox, John, *John Knox on Rebellion*, ed. by Mason, Roger A., (Cambridge: CUP, 1994).
- History of the Reformation in Scotland*, ed. by Dickinson, William Croft, 2 vols, (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1949).
- Las Casas, Bartolome de, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the West Indies*, ed. and trans by Griffin, Nigel, and Pagden, Anthony, (London: Penguin, 1992).
- A Letter Giving a Description of the Isthmus of Darien (Where the Scots Colonie is settled), From a Gentleman who lives there at present*, (Edinburgh: John Mackie, James Wardlaw, 1699).
- Luther, Martin, *Luther's Works*, ed. by Pelikan, Jaroslav et al., 55 vols, (St Louis: Concordia Publishing and Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958-1986).
- Luther, Martin, and Calvin, John, *Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority*, ed. and trans. by Hopfl, Harro, (Cambridge: CUP, 1991).
- Macaulay, T.B., *Critical and Historical Essays contributed to the Edinburgh Review*, (London: Longman, 1878).
- Machiavelli, Niccolo, *The Discourses*, ed. by Crick, Bernard and Richardson, Brian, trans. by. Walker, Leslie J, (London: Penguin, 1983).
- The Prince*, ed. and trans. by Bonadella, Peter, and Musa, Mark, (Oxford: OUP, 1984).
- Mackenzie, Henry, *Report of the Highland Society of Scotland, Appointed To Enquire into the Nature and Authenticity of the Poems of Ossian*, (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co., 1805).
- Major, John, *A History of Greater Britain*, ed. by Mackay, Aeneas J.G., trans. by Constable, Archibald, (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1892).
- Mandeville, Bernard, *The Fable of the Bees*, ed. by Harth, Phillip, (London: Penguin, 1989).
- Mather, Cotton, *Magnalia Christi Americana, Books I and II*, ed. by Murdock Kenneth B., and Miller, Elizabeth W., (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1977).
- Mill, James, *The History of British India*, ed. by Wilson, Horace Hyman, 4th edn, 9 vols, (London: James Malden and Co., 1840).
- Millar, John, *An Historical View of the English Government, from the Settlement of the Saxons in Britain to the Revolution in 1688*, 4 vols,

- (London: J. Mawman, 1812).
- Montaigne, Michel de, *The Essays of Michel de Montaigne*, ed. and trans. by Screech, M.A., (London: Penguin, 1991).
- Montesquieu, Charles Louis de Secondat, *Persian Letters*, ed. and trans. by Betts, C.J., (London: Penguin, 1980).
- The Spirit of the Laws*, ed. and trans. by Cohler Anne et al., Cambridge: CUP, 1995).
- Neal, Daniel, *The History of New-England, Containing an Impartial Account of the Civil and Ecclesiastical Affairs of the Country to the Year of Our Lord, 1700*, 2 vols, (London: J. Clark, 1720).
- Paterson, William, *The Writings of William Paterson*, ed. by Bannister, S., 2 vols, (London: Effington Wilson, 1858).
- 'Philo-Britain', *The Defence of the Scots Settlement Answer'd, Paragraph by Paragraph*, (London, 1699).
- 'Philo-Caledon', *A Defence of the Scots Settlement at Darien, With an Answer to the Spanish Memorial against it, And Arguments to prove That it is in the Interest of England to join with the Scots, and protect It; To Which is added a Description of the Country, and a particular Account of the Scots Colony*, (Edinburgh, 1699).
- Raynal, Guillaume Thomas, *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*, 3 vols, (Edinburgh: J. and J. Robertson, 1811).
- Rennell, James, *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan, or the Mogul Empire*, (London: printed for the Author, 1788).
- [Ridpath, George], *Scotland's Grievances relating to Darien*, ([n.p.], 1700).
- Robertson, William, Sr, *Ministers Ought to Please God rather than men: A Sermon preached at the Opening of the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, May 3rd, 1737, By Mr William Robertson, one of the Ministers of Edinburgh*, (Edinburgh: R. Fleming, 1737).
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, *The Basic Political Writings*, ed. by Gay, Peter, trans. by Cress, Donald A., (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 1987).
- Rutherford, Samuel, *Letters of Samuel Rutherford: A Selection*, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1996).
- Lex, Rex, or The Law and the Prince*, (Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1843).
- Smith, Adam, *The Correspondence of Adam Smith*, ed. by Mossner E.C. and Ross, I.S., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).
- An Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. by Campbell R.H. and Skinner, A.S., 2 vols, (Indianapolis: Liberty, 1981).
- Lectures on Jurisprudence*, ed. by Meek R.L. et al., (Indianapolis: Liberty, 1982).
- The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. by. Raphael D.D. and Macfie, A.L., (Indianapolis: Liberty, 1982).
- Smith, John, *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England and The Summer Isles, Together with The True Travels, Adventures and Observations, and a Sea Grammar*, 2 vols, (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Son, 1907).
- Somerville, Thomas, *My Own Life and Times*, (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1861).
- Stith, William, *The History of the First Discovery and Settlement of Virginia*,

- (London, 1753).
- Stuart, Gilbert, *The History of Scotland from the Establishment of the Reformation till the Death of Queen Mary, to which are annexed Observations Concerning the Public Law and the Constitution of Scotland*, 2nd edn, 2 vols, (London: John Murray, 1784).
- [Stuart, Gilbert], *Character of a certain Popular Historian, now Ministerial Agent for Reconciling our complaisant Clergy to the Church of Rome; From the Writings of a Celebrated Philosopher, now Deceased*, (Edinburgh, 1779).
- Tacitus, *The Agricola and the Germania*, ed. and trans. by Mattingly H. and Handford, S.A., (London: Penguin, 1970).
- The Annals of Imperial Rome*, ed. and trans. by Grant, Michael, revised edn., (London: Penguin, 1989).
- The Histories*, ed. and trans. by Wellesley, Kenneth, revised edn, (London: Penguin, 1991).
- [Thomson, Charles], *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Alienation of the Delaware and Shawanese Indians from the British Interest, And the Measures taken for recovering their friendship*, (London: J. Wilkie, 1759).
- Tytler, William, *An Inquiry, Historical and Critical, into the Evidence against Mary, Queen of Scots, and an Examination of the Histories of Dr Robertson and Mr Hume, with respect to that Evidence*, 4th edn, 2 vols, (London: Cadell, 1790).
- Voltaire, *The Age of Louis XIV*, ed. by F.C. Green, trans. by Pollack, Martyn P., (London: Heron Books, 1961).
- An Essay on Universal History, the Manners and Spirit of Nations, From the Reign of Charlemaign, To the Age of Lewis XIV*, ed. and trans. by Mr Nugent, new edn, 3 vols, (Edinburgh: Balfour and Co., 1777).
- The History of Charles XII*, ed. by John Burns, trans. by Todhunter, Winifred, (London: Everyman, 1936).
- Letters on England*, ed. and trans. by Tancock, Leonard, (London: Penguin, 1980).
- Philosophical Dictionary*, ed. and trans. by Besterman, Theodore, (London: Penguin, 1972).
- Wafer, Lionel, *A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America*, ed. by Elliott Joyce, L.E., Hakluyt Society Publications, 2nd series, no. 73, (Oxford: Hakluyt Society, 1934).
- Walpole, Horace, *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. by Lewis W.S. et al., 48 vols, Oxford: OUP and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937-1983).
- Wellwood-Moncreiff, Henry, bart., *An Account of the Life and Writings of John Erskine, D.D.*, (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co., 1818).
- Wesley, John, *The Works of John Wesley*, 14 vols, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958).
- Whitaker, John, *Mary, Queen of Scots Vindicated*, 3 vols, (London: John Murray, 1788).
- Wilberforce, William, *A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes of This Country, contrasted with Real Christianity*, 2nd edn, (London: Cadell and Davies, 1797).

Wodrow, Robert, *Analecta: or Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences, mostly relating to Scotch Ministers and Christians*, 4 vols, (Edinburgh: Maitland Club, 1842-1843).

Zarate, Augustin de, *The Discovery and Conquest of Peru*, ed. and trans. by Cohen, J.M., (London: Penguin, 1968).

E) Primary Sources: Periodicals, Newspapers, Items in Books etc.

'An Account of the Debate on the Schism Overture', *Scots Magazine*, 28 (1766), 337-341.

'An Account of the Life of Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland, from Dr Robertson's Excellent History of Scotland, Just Published, in Two Volumes, 4to', *Gentleman's Magazine*, 29 (1759), 151-154, 214-217, 253-256, 314-319, 371-376, 419-423, 475-481.

Anderson, James, 'An Historical Essay, Shewing that the Crown and Kingdom of Scotland is Imperial and Independent', ed. by Ferguson, William, in *Stair Society Miscellany III*, ed. by Gordon, W.M., (Edinburgh: Stair Society, 1992), pp. 1-130.

Article on Robertson's Admission to the Royal Academy in Madrid, *Edinburgh Advertiser*, no. 1441 (17/10.1777-21/10/1777), 260.

[Boswell, James], 'A Sketch of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland, and the State of Parties in it at Present; with Specimens of the Oratory of Some of the Most Distinguished Members of That Church Now Living', *London Magazine*, 41 (1772), 181-187, 237-242.

Calvin, John, 'On Civil Government (*Institutio Christianae Religionis*, Book IV, chapter 20)', in Luther, Martin and Calvin, John, *Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority*, ed. by Hopfl, Harro, (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), pp. 47-86.

Defoe, Daniel, 'An Argument, Shewing, that a Standing Army, with Consent of Parliament, is not Inconsistent with a Free Government', in Defoe, Daniel, *The True-Born Englishman and Other Writings*, ed. by Furbank, P.N. and Owens, W.R., (London: Penguin, 1997), pp. 5-21.

The Edinburgh Review, 2nd edn, (London: Longman, 1818).

'Euthus', 'On Some Calumnies against the Dead', *Blackwoods Magazine*, 2 (Jan-Mar, 1818), pp. 400-402.

Extract from *Charles V*, *Edinburgh Advertiser*, no. 546 (21/3/1769-24/3/1769), 185.

Fletcher of Saltoun. Andrew, 'An Account of a Conversation concerning a Right regulation of Governments for the common Good of Mankind. In a Letter to the Marquiss of Montrose, the Earls of Rothes, Roxburg and Haddington, from London the first of December, 1703', in Fletcher of Saltoun, Andrew, *Political Works*, ed. by Robertson, John, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp. 175-215.

'A Discourse concerning the Affairs of Spain', in Fletcher of Saltoun, Andrew, *Political Works*, ed. by Robertson, John, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp. 83-117.

'A Discourse of Government with relation to Militias', in Fletcher of Saltoun, Andrew, *Political Works*, ed. by Robertson, John, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp. 1-32.

'Speeches by a member of the Parliament which began at Edinburgh

- the 6th of May, 1703', in Fletcher of Saltoun, Andrew, *Political Works*, ed. by Robertson, John, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp. 129-174.
- 'Two Discourses concerning the Affairs of Scotland', in Fletcher of Saltoun, Andrew, *Political Works*, ed. by Robertson, John, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp. 34-81.
- 'A Friend to the Constitution', 'To the Reverend Dr Robertson', *Edinburgh Advertiser*, no. 1410 (1/7/1777-4/7/1777), 9.
- [Guthrie, William], Review of *Charles V*, *Critical Review*, 27 (1769), 241-256, 321-333, 401-415.
- Hume, David, 'Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth', in Hume, David, *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. by Miller, Eugene F., (Indianapolis: Liberty, 1985), pp. 512-529.
- 'Of the Balance of Trade', in Hume, David, *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. by Miller, Eugene F., (Indianapolis: Liberty, 1985), pp. 308-326.
- 'Of the Origin of Government', in Hume, David, *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. by Miller, Eugene F., (Indianapolis: Liberty, 1985), pp. 37-41.
- 'Of Passive Obedience', in Hume, David, *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. by Miller, Eugene F., (Indianapolis: Liberty, 1985), pp. 488-492.
- 'Of Refinement in the Arts', in Hume, David, *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. by Miller, Eugene F., (Indianapolis: Liberty, 1985), pp. 268-280.
- 'Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences', in Hume, David, *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. by Miller, Eugene F., (Indianapolis: Liberty, 1985), pp. 111-137.
- 'Of Superstition and Enthusiasm', in Hume, David, *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. by Miller, Eugene F., (Indianapolis: Liberty, 1985), pp. 73-79.
- 'Whether the British Government inclines more to Absolute Monarchy or to a Republic', in Hume, David, *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. by Miller, Eugene F., (Indianapolis: Liberty, 1985), pp. 47-54.
- [Hume, David?], Review of *Scotland*, *Critical Review*, 7 (1759), 89-103.
- James VI and I, 'A Counterblaste to Tobacco', in James VI and I, *Minor Prose Works of King James VI and I*, ed. by Craigie, James and Law, Alexander, (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1982), pp. 83-99.
- 'The Trve Lawe of free Monarchies: or the Reciproock and Mvtuall Dvtie Betwixt a free King, and his naturall Subjects', in James VI and I, *Minor Prose Works of King James VI and I*, ed. by Craigie, James and Law, Alexander, (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1982), pp. 57-82.
- Knox, John, 'The Appellation of John Knox from the cruel and most unjust sentence pronounced against him by the false bishops and clergy of Scotland, with his supplication and exhortation to the nobility, estates and commonalty of the same realm', in Knox, John, *John Knox on Rebellion*, ed. by Mason, Roger A., (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), pp. 72-114.
- 'L.L.', 'To the Rev. Dr Robertson, on his late Publication of the History of America', *Gentleman's Magazine*, 48 (1778), 11-14.

- 'To the Rev. Dr Robertson, on the Publication of the Second Volume of the History of America', *Gentleman's Magazine*, 48 (1778), 72-73.
- Letter on Scotland, *Gentleman's Magazine*, 31 (1761), 261-262.
- Luther, Martin, 'Temporal Authority: To What Extent it Should be Obeyed', in Luther, Martin, *Luther's Works*, ed. by Pelikan, Jaroslav et al., 55 vols, (St Louis: Concordia and Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958-1986), XLV, pp. 81-129.
- 'Dr Martin Luther's Warning to his Dear German People', in Luther, Martin, *Luther's Works*, ed. by Pelikan, Jaroslav et al., 55 vols, (St Louis: Concordia and Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958-1986), XLVII, pp. 11-55.
- Macaulay, T.B., 'Gladstone on Church and State', in Macaulay, T.B., *Critical and Historical Essays contributed to the Edinburgh Review*, (London: Longman, 1878), pp. 468-502.
- Millar, John, 'The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks', in Lehmann, William C., *John Millar of Glasgow, 1735-1801: His Life and Thought and his Contributions to Sociological Analysis*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1960), pp. 167-322,
- Montaigne, Michel de, 'On the Cannibals', in *The Essays of Michel de Montaigne*, ed. and trans. by Screech, M.A., (London: Penguin, 1991), pp. 228-241.
- Paterson, William, 'A Proposal to Plant a Colony in Darien, To Protect the Indians against Spain, and to Open the Trade of South America to All Nations', in Paterson, William, *The Writings of William Paterson*, ed. by Bannister, S., 2 vols, (London: Effington Wilson, 1858), I, pp. 115-160.
- 'A Protestant', 'Letter to the Printer', *Caledonian Mercury*, 5 February, 1773, 3.
- Review of *America*, *Annual Register*, 20 (1777), 214-234.
- Review of *America*, *Critical Review*, 43 (Jan-Jun, 1777), 401-416; 44 (Jul-Dec, 1777), 49-61, 115-130.
- Review of *America*, *Gentleman's Magazine*, 48 (1777), 25-26, 78-81.
- Review of *America*, Books IX and X, *Monthly Review*, 2nd series, 27 (Sep-Dec, 1798), 152-156.
- Review of *America*, Books IX and X, *Critical Review*, new series, 29 (1800), 178-182.
- Review of *Charles V*, *Annual Register*, 12 (1769), 254-272.
- Review of *Charles V*, *Gentleman's Magazine*, 39 (1769), 177-180.
- Review of *India*, *Critical Review*, new series, 3 (1791), 121-131, 556-566.
- Review of *India*, *Gentleman's Magazine*, 61 (Jul-Dec, 1791), 931-936.
- Review of *India*, *Monthly Review*, 2nd series, 6 (Sep-Dec, 1791), 1-11.
- Review of *Scotland*, *Annual Register*, 2 (1759), 489-494.
- Review of *Scotland*, *Monthly Review*, 20 (Jan-Jun 1759), 163-178, 193-207.
- Rousseau, Jean Jacques, 'Discourse on the Origin of Inequality', in Rousseau, Jean Jacques, *The Basic Political Writings*, ed. by Gay, Peter, trans. by Cress, Donald A., (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 1987), pp. 25-109.
- [Ruffhead, Owen], Review of *Charles V*, *Monthly Review*, 40 (Jan-Jun 1769), 320-333; 41 (Jul-Dec, 1769), 81-94.
- [Stuart, Gilbert], 'An Account of the Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, by a Person who attended and took Notes', *Edinburgh Magazine and Review*, 3 (1775), 356-365, 409-420.

Review of *America*, *Monthly Review*, 56 (Jan-Jun, 1777), 449-457; 57 (Jul-Dec, 1777), 43-59, 120-140.

Review of *Charles V*, *London Magazine*, 38 (1769), 156-159, 209-213.

E) Secondary Sources: Books and Pamphlets

- Allan, David, *Virtue and Learning in the Scottish Enlightenment: Ideas of Scholarship in early Modern History*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1993).
- Ash, Marinell, *The Strange Death of Scottish History*, (Edinburgh: Ramsay Head Press, 1980).
- Atkinson, James, *Martin Luther and the Birth of Protestantism*, (London: Penguin, 1968).
- Berkhofer, R.F., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*, (New York: Knopf, 1978).
- Berry, Christopher J., *Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1997).
- Beveridge, Craig and Turnbull, Ronald, *The Eclipse of Scottish Culture*, (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1989).
- Birley, Robert, *Sunk Without Trace: Some Forgotten Masterpieces Reconsidered*, (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1962).
- Black, J.B. *The Art of History: A Study of Four Great Historians of the Eighteenth Century*, (London: Methuen, 1926).
- Bower, Alexander, *The History of the University of Edinburgh*, 3 vols, (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Waugh and Innes, 1817-1830).
- Brading, D.A., *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots and the Liberal State*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1991).
- Bradshaw, Brendan and Roberts, Peter, (eds), *British Consciousness and Identity: the Making of Britain, 1533-1707*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1998).
- Brown, Stewart J., (ed.), *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997).
- Burleigh, J.H.S., *A Church History of Scotland*, (London: OUP, 1960).
- Burns, J.H., *The True Law of Kingship: Concepts of Monarchy in Early Modern Scotland*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1996).
- Burns, J.H. and Goldie, Mark, (eds), *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1991).
- Camie, Charles, *Experience and Enlightenment: Socialization for Change in Scotland*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1983).
- Canny, Nicholas and Pagden, Anthony, (eds), *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).
- Carnall, Geoffrey and Nicholson, Colin, (eds), *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings: Papers from a Bicentenary Commemoration*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1989).
- Clark, J.C.D., *English Society, 1688-1832: Ideology, Social Structure and Political Practice during the Ancien Regime*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1985).
- The Language of Liberty, 1660-1832: Political Discourse and Social Dynamics in the Anglo-American World*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1994).
- Claydon, Tony and McBride, Ian, (eds), *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c1650-c1850*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1998).

- Clingham, G., (ed.), *New Light on Boswell: Critical and Historical Essays on the Occasion of the Bicentenary of 'The Life of Johnson'*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1991).
- Colley, Linda, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).
- Craig, Cairns et al., (eds), *The History of Scottish Literature*, 4 vols, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988).
- Craig, David, *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People, 1680-1830*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961).
- Cunningham, John, *The Church History of Scotland, from the Commencement of the Christian Era to the Present Century*, 2 vols, (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1859).
- Daiches, David, *The Paradox of Scottish Culture*, (London: OUP, 1964).
- Devine, T.M., *The Scottish Nation, 1700-2000*, (London: Allen Lane, 1999).
- Devine, T.M and Young, J.R., *Eighteenth-Century Scotland: New Perspectives*, (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999).
- Dickens, A.G. and Tonkin, John, *The Reformation in Historical Thought*, (London: Basil Blackwell, 1985).
- Donnachie, Ian and Whatley, Christopher, (eds), *The Manufacture of Scottish History*, (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1992).
- Donovan, Robert Kent, *No Popery and Radicalism: Opposition to Roman Relief in Scotland, 1778-1782*, (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1987).
- Drummond, Andrew L. and Bulloch, James, *The Scottish Church, 1688-1843: The Age of the Moderates*, (Edinburgh: St Andrew's Press, 1973).
- Dugmore, C.W., (ed.), *Studies in the Reformation: Luther to Hooker*, (London: Athlone Press, 1980).
- Dukes, Paul and Dunkley, John, (eds), *Culture and Revolution*, (London and New York: Pinter Publishers, 1990).
- Dwyer, John, *Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1987).
- Dwyer, John, et al., (eds), *New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1982).
- Dwyer, John and Sher, Richard B., (eds), *Sociability and Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1993).
- Elliott, J.H., *Imperial Spain, 1469-1716*, (London: Penguin, 1970).
- Ferguson, James, *Robert Ferguson the Plotter, or the Secret of the Rye-House Conspiracy and the Story of a strange Career*, (Edinburgh: D.Douglas, 1887).
- Ferguson, William, *The Identity of the Scottish Nation: An Historical Quest*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1998).
- Scotland, 1689 to the Present*, (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1968).
- Fry, Michael, *The Dundas Despotism*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1992).
- Gay, Peter, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, 2 vols, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1969).
- Graham, Henry Grey, *Scottish Men of Letters in the Eighteenth Century*, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1908).
- Gordon, Daniel, *Citizens without Sovereignty: Equality and Sociability in French Thought, 1670-1789*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961).

- Harvie, Christopher, *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics, 1707-1945*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1977).
- Hay, Denys, *Annalists and Historians*, (London: Methuen, 1977).
- Renaissance Essays*, (London: Hambleden Press, 1988).
- Hetherington, W.M., *History of the Church of Scotland, from the Introduction Of Christianity to the Meetings of the Commission of the General Assembly in August 1841*, 2nd edn, (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1842).
- Hont, Istvan and Ignatieff, Michael, (eds), *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1983).
- Hook, Andrew, *Scotland and America: A Study of Cultural Relations, 1750-1835*, (Glasgow and London: Blackie, 1975).
- Humphreys, R.A., *William Robertson and his History of America: A Lecture delivered at Canning House on 11 June, 1954*, (London, 1954).
- Insh, George Pratt, *Scottish Colonial Schemes, 1620-1686*, (Glasgow: MacLehose, Jackson and Co., 1922).
- Kenyon, John, *The History Men: The Historical Profession in England since the Renaissance*, 2nd edn (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1993).
- Kidd, Colin, *British Identities before Nationalism: Ethnicity and Nationhood in the Atlantic World, 1600-1800*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1999).
- Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British Identity, 1689-c.1830*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1993).
- Kupperman, Karen Ordahl, (ed.), *America in European Consciousness, 1493-1750*, (Williamsburg, University of North Carolina Press, 1995).
- Landsman, Ned C., *Scotland and its First American Colony, 1683-1765*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).
- Lehmann, William C., *John Millar of Glasgow, 1735-1801: His Life and Thought and his Contributions to Sociological Analysis*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1960).
- Lenman, Bruce, *Integration and Industrialization: Scotland 1746-1832*, (London: Edward Arnold, 1981).
- MacDougall, Norman, (ed.), *Church, Politics and Society: Scotland, 1408-1929*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1983).
- Macfarlane, I.D., *Buchanan*, (London: Duckworth, 1981).
- MacLaren, Moray, (ed.), *The Wisdom of the Scots*, (London: Michael Joseph, 1961).
- Malament, Barbara C., (ed.), *After the Reformation: Essays in Honour of J.H. Hexter*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980).
- Marshall, P.J. and Williams, Glyndwr, *The Great Map of Mankind: British Perceptions of the World in the Age of Enlightenment*, (London, Melbourne and Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1982).
- Mason, Roger A., (ed.), *Scotland and England. 1286-1815*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1987).
- (ed.), *Scots and Britons: Scottish Political Thought and the Union of 1603*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1994).
- Mathieson, William Law, *The Awakening of Scotland: A History from 1747 to 1797*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1910).
- Church and Reform in Scotland: A History from 1797 to 1843*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1916).
- Meek, Ronald L., *Economics and Ideology and Other Essays: Studies in the Development of Economic Thought*, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1967).

- Social Science and the Ignoble Savage*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1976).
- Meikle, Henry W., *Scotland and the French Revolution*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1912).
- Meinecke, Friedrich, *Historism*, trans. by J.E. Anderson, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972).
- Morren, Nathaniel, (ed.), *Annals of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*, 2 vols, (Edinburgh: J. Johnstone, 1838-1840).
- Mossner, Ernest Campbell, *The Life of David Hume*, (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1954).
- Murdoch, Alexander, *The People Above: Politics and Administration in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1980).
- Nairn, Tom, *the Break-Up of Britain*, (London: New Left Books, 1979).
- Nolan, E. Bennet, *Benjamin Franklin in Scotland and Ireland*, (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1938).
- O'Brien, Conor Cruise, *The Great Melody: A Thematic Biography and Commented Anthology of Edmund Burke*, (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1992).
- O'Brien, Karen, *Narratives of Enlightenment: Cosmopolitan History from Voltaire to Gibbon*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997).
- Pagden, Anthony, *European Encounters with the New World: From Renaissance to Romanticism*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993).
- The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1982).
- Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France, c1500-c1800*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995).
- Pearce, Roy Harvey, *The Savages of America: A Study of the Indians and the Idea of Civilization*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965).
- Phillipson, Nicholas, *Hume*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1985).
- Phillipson, N.T. and Mitchison, R., (eds), *Scotland in the Age of Improvement: Essays in Scottish History in the Eighteenth Century*, 2nd edn, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1995).
- Pittock, Murray G.H., *Inventing and Resisting Britain: Cultural Identities in Britain and Ireland, 1685-1789*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997).
- Jacobitism*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998).
- The Myth of the Jacobite Clans*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1995).
- Pocock, J.G.A., *Barbarism and Religion*, 2 vols, (Cambridge: CUP, 1999).
- The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).
- Politics, Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History*, (New York: Athenaeum, 1971).
- Virtue, Commerce and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1995).
- Porter, Roy and Teich, Mikulas, *The Enlightenment in National Context*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1981).
- Prebble, John, *The Darien Disaster*, (London: Penguin, 1970).
- Rainy, Robert, *Three Lectures on the Church of Scotland, with Especial Reference to the Dean of Westminster's Recent Course on That Subject*, (Edinburgh: John MacLaren, 1872).
- Ricoeur, Paul, *History and Truth*, ed. and trans. by Charles A. Kelbley,

- (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965).
- Robertson, John, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the Militia Issue*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1985).
- Robertson, John, (ed.), *A Union for Empire: Political Thought and the British Union of 1707*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1995).
- Robbins, Caroline: *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman: Studies in the Transmission, Development and Circumstance of English Liberal Thought from the Restoration of Charles II until the War with the Thirteen Colonies*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959).
- Ronan, Charles E., *Francisco Javier Clavigero, S.J., (1731-1787), Figure of the Mexican Enlightenment: His Life and Works*, (Rome: Institutum Historicum, 1977).
- Ross, Ian Simpson, *The Life of Adam Smith*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).
- Said, Edward W., *Orientalism*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).
- Samuel, Raphael and Thompson, Paul, (eds), *The Myths We Live By*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1990).
- Saunders, Bailey, *The Life and Letters of James Macpherson*, (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1894; reprint, New York: Greenwood Press, 1968).
- Skinner, Quentin, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols, (Cambridge: CUP, 1979).
- Shaw, John Stuart, *The Management of Scottish Society, 1707-1764*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1983).
- The Political History of Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, (London: Macmillan, 1999).
- Sher, Richard B., *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: the Moderate Literati of Edinburgh*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).
- Sher, Richard B. and Smitten, Jeffrey, (eds), *Scotland and America in the Age of Enlightenment*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1990).
- Siebert, Donald, (ed.), *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, 2nd series, CIV: *British Prose Writers, 1660-1800*, (Detroit and London: Gale Research, 1991).
- Stewart, M.A., (ed.), *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment*, 2nd edn, (Oxford: OUP, 1998).
- Trevor-Roper, Hugh, (Lord Dacre), *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change, and Other Essays*, 2nd edn, (London: Macmillan, 1972).
- Watson, John, *The Scot of the Eighteenth Century: His Religion and his Life*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907).
- Williamson, Arthur H., *Scottish National Consciousness in the Age of James VI: The Apocalypse, the Union and the Shaping of Scotland's Public Culture*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1979).
- Zachs, William, *Without Regard to Good Manners: A Biography of Gilbert Stuart, 1743-1786*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1992).

F) Secondary Sources: Items in Books, Journals, etc

- Allan, David, 'Protestantism, Presbyterianism and National Identity in Eighteenth-Century Scottish History', in Claydon, Tony and McBride, Ian, (eds), *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c1650-c1850*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), pp. 182-205.
- 'Prudence and Patronage: The Politics of Culture in Seventeenth-

- Century Scotland', *History of European Ideas*, 18 (1994), 467-480.
- '"This Inquisitive Age": Past and Present in the Scottish Enlightenment', *Scottish Historical Review*, 46 (1997), 69-85.
- Armitage, David, 'The New World and British Historical Thought: From Richard Hakluyt to William Robertson', in Kupperman, Karen Ordahl, (ed.), *America in European Consciousness, 1493-1750*, (Williamsburg: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), pp. 52-75.
- 'The Scottish Vision of Empire: Intellectual Origins of the Darien Venture', in Robertson, John, (ed.), *A Union for Empire: Political Thought and the British Union of 1707*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), pp. 97-120.
- Ash, Marinell, 'William Wallace and Robert the Bruce: The Life and Death of a National Myth', in Samuel, Raphael and Thomson, Paul, (eds), *The Myths we Live By*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 83-94.
- Aspinwall, Bernard, 'William Robertson and America', in Devine, T.M. and Young, J.R. (eds), *Eighteenth-Century Scotland: New Perspectives*, (East Linton, Tuckwell Press, 1999).
- Basker, James G., 'Scotticisms and the Problem of Cultural Identity in Eighteenth-Century Britain', in Dwyer, John and Sher, Richard B., (eds), *Sociability and society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1993), pp. 81-95.
- Black, Jeremy, 'The Enlightenment Historian at Work: The Researches of William Robertson', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 65 (1988), 251-260.
- Bongie, Lawrence L., 'The Eighteenth-Century Marian Controversy and an Unpublished Letter by David Hume', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 1 (1986), 236-253.
- Briggs, Harold E., 'Keats, Robertson and *That Most Hateful Land*', *PMLA*, 59 (1944), 184-199.
- Brockington, J.L., 'Warren Hastings and Orientalism', in Carnall, Geoffrey and Nicholson, Colin, (eds), *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings: Papers from a Bicentenary Commemoration*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1989), pp. 91-108.
- Brown, Keith M., 'Scottish Identity in the Seventeenth Century', in Bradshaw, Brendan and Roberts, Peter, (eds), *British Consciousness and Identity: The Making of Britain, 1533-1707*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), pp. 236-258.
- Brown, Stewart J., 'An Eighteenth-Century Historian on the Amerindians: Culture, Colonialism and Christianity in William Robertson's History of America', *Studies in World Christianity*, 2 (1996), 204-222.
- 'William Robertson (1721-1793) and the Scottish Enlightenment', in Brown, Stewart J., (ed.), *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp. 7-35.
- Bryant, G.J., 'Scots in India in the Eighteenth Century', *Scottish Historical Review*, 64 (1985), 22-41.
- Burleigh, J.H.S., 'The Scottish Reformation as seen in 1660 and 1760', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 13 (1959), 241-256.
- Burns, J.H., 'George Buchanan and the Anti-monarchomachs', in Mason, Roger A., (ed.), *Scots and Britons: Scottish Political Thought and the Union of 1603*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), pp. 138-158.
- Cargill-Thompson, W.D.J., 'Luther and the Right of Resistance to the Emperor', in Dugmore, C.W., (ed.), *Studies in the Reformation: Luther to Hooker*, (London: Athlone Press, 1980), pp. 3-41.
- Carnall, Geoffrey, 'Historical Writing in the Later Eighteenth Century', in Craig Cairns et al., (eds), *The History of Scottish Literature*, 4 vols, (Aberdeen:

- Aberdeen, 1988), pp. 207-218.
- 'Robertson and Contemporary Images of India', in Brown, Stewart J., (ed.), *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp. 210-230.
- Carey, Daniel, 'Reconsidering Rousseau: Sociability, Moral Sense and the American Indian from Hutcheson to Bartram', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 21 (1998), 25-38.
- Cater, Jeremy J., 'The making of Principal Robertson in 1762: Politics and the University of Edinburgh in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century', *Scottish Historical Review*, 49 (1970), 60-84.
- Chinard, Gilbert, 'Eighteenth-Century Ideas on America as a Human Habitat', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 91 (1947), 27-57.
- Church, Henry Ward, 'Corneille de Pauw and the Controversy over his *Recherches Philosophiques*', *PMLA*, 51 (1936), 178-207.
- Clark, I.D.L., 'From Protest to Reaction: the Moderate regime in the Church of Scotland, 1752-1805', in Phillipson, N.T. and Mitchison, Rosalind, (eds), *Scotland in the age of Improvement: Essays in Scottish History in the Eighteenth Century*, 2nd edn, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1996), pp. 200-224.
- Cooper of Culross, Lord, 'The Declaration of Arbroath in English', in MacLaren, Moray, (ed.), *The Wisdom of the Scots*, (London: Michael Joseph, 1961), pp. 53-56.
- Dean, Dennis R., 'James Hutton on Religion and Geology: The Unpublished Preface to his *Theory of the Earth*, (1788)', *Annals of Science*, 32 (1975), 187-193.
- Duckworth, Mark, 'An Eighteenth-Century Questionnaire: William Robertson on the Indians', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 11 (1987), 36-49.
- Edwards, Owen Dudley, 'Robertsonian Romanticism and Realism', in Brown, Stewart J., (ed.), *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp. 92-121.
- Emerson, Roger L., 'The Social Composition of Enlightened Scotland: The Society of Edinburgh, 1754-1764', *Studies in Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 114 (1973), 291-330.
- Fagerstrom, Dalphy, I., 'Scottish Opinion and the American Revolution', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 11 (1954), 252-276.
- Fearnley-Sander, Mary, 'Philosophical History and the Scottish Reformation: William Robertson and the Knoxian Tradition', *Historical Journal*, 33 (1990), 323-338.
- Ferguson, William, 'Introduction', in James Anderson, 'An Essay, Shewing that The Crown and Kingdom of Scotland is Imperial and Independent', ed. by Ferguson, William, in *Stair Society Miscellany III*, (Edinburgh: Stair Society, 1992), pp. 1-26.
- Finlay, Richard J., 'Keeping the Covenant: Scottish National Identity', in Devine, T.M. and Young, J.R., (eds), *Eighteenth-Century Scotland: New Perspectives*, (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), pp. 121-133.
- Fry, Michael, 'A Commercial Empire: Scotland and British Expansion in the Eighteenth Century', in Devine T.M. and Young, J.R., (eds), *Eighteenth-Century Scotland: New Perspectives*, (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), pp. 53-69.
- 'The Whig Interpretation of Scottish History', in Donnachie, Ian and Whatley, Christopher, (eds), *The Manufacture of Scottish History*, (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1992), pp. 72-89.

- Gilbert, Felix, 'Introduction', in Robertson, William, *The Progress of Society in Europe*, ed. by Gilbert, Felix, (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1972), pp. vii-xxvii.
- Goldie, Mark, 'The Scottish Catholic Enlightenment', *Journal of British Studies*, 30 (1991), 20-62.
- Hay, Denys, 'Muratori and the British Historians', in Hay, Denys, *Renaissance Essays*, (London: Hambledon Press, 1988), pp. 85-103.
- Henderson, E.F., 'Two Lives of the Emperor Charles V', *American Historical Review*, 9 (1903-1904), 23-35.
- Hoebel, E. Adamson, 'William Robertson: An Eighteenth-Century Anthropologist-Historian', *American Anthropologist*, 62 (1960), 648-655.
- Hopfl, H.M., 'From Savage to Scotsman: Conjectural History in the Scottish Enlightenment', *Journal of British Studies*, 17 (1978), 19-40.
- Horn, D.B., 'Principal William Robertson, D.D., Historian', *University of Edinburgh Journal*, 18 (1956-1957), 155-168.
- 'Some Scottish Writers of History in the Eighteenth Century', *Scottish Historical Review*, 49 (1961), 1-18.
- Kidd, Colin, 'The Ideological Significance of Robertson's *History of Scotland*', in Brown, Stewart J., (ed.), *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp. 122-144.
- 'North Britishness and the Nature of Eighteenth-Century British Patriotisms', *Historical Journal*, 39 (1996), 361-382.
- 'The Rehabilitation of Scottish Jacobitism', *Scottish Historical Review*, 77 (1998), 58-76.
- 'Religious Realignment between the Restoration and Union', in Robertson, John, (ed.), *A Union for Empire: Political Thought and the British Union of 1707*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), pp. 145-170.
- Kingdon, Robert L., 'Calvinism and Resistance Theory, 1550-1580', in Burns, J.H., and Goldie, Mark, (eds), *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), pp. 193-218.
- Kingwell, Mark, 'Politics and Polite Society in the Scottish Enlightenment', *Historical Reflections*, 19 (1993), 363-387.
- Landsman, Ned B., 'Presbyterians and Provincial Society: The Evangelical Enlightenment in the West of Scotland', in Dwyer, John and Sher, Richard B., (eds), *Sociability and Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1993), pp. 194-209.
- Lenman, Bruce P., 'Aristocratic "Country" Whiggery and the American Revolution', in Sher, Richard B. and Smitten, Jeffrey R., (eds), *Scotland And America in the Age of Enlightenment*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1990), pp. 180-192.
- ' "From Savage to Scot" via the French and the Spaniards: Principal Robertson's Spanish Sources', in Brown, Stewart J., (ed.), *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp. 196-209.
- 'The Scottish Enlightenment, Stagnation and Empire in India, 1772-1813', *Indo-British Review*, 21 (1996), 53-61.
- 'The Teaching of Scottish History in the Scottish Universities', *Scottish Historical Review*, 52 (1973), 165-190.
- Livingston, Donald L., 'Hume, English Barbarism and American Independence', in Sher Richard B. and Smitten, Jeffrey R., (eds), *Scotland and America in the Age of Enlightenment*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1990), pp. 133-147.

- Mason, Roger A., 'George Buchanan, James VI and the Presbyterians', in Mason, Roger A., (ed.), *Scots and Britons: Scottish Political Thought and the Union of 1603*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), pp. 112-137.
- 'Introduction', in Knox, John, *John Knox on Rebellion*, ed. by Mason, Roger A., (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), pp. viii-xxiv.
- 'Scotching the Brut: Politics, History and National Myth in Sixteenth-Century Britain', in Mason, Roger A., (ed.), *Scotland and England, 1286-1815*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1987), pp. 60-84.
- 'The Scottish Reformation and the Origins of Anglo-British Imperialism', in Mason, Roger A. (ed.), *Scots and Britons: Scottish Political Thought and the Union of 1603*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), pp. 161-187.
- McLaren, Martha, 'From Analysis to Prescription: Scottish Concepts of Asian Despotism in Early Nineteenth-Century British India', *International History Review*, 15 (1993), 469-501.
- 'Philosophical History and the Ideology of the Company State: the Historical Works of John Malcolm and Mountstuart Elphinstone', *Indo-British Review*, 18 (1993), 130-143.
- McKelvey, James L., 'William Robertson and Lord Bute', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 6 (1969), 238-247.
- Meek, Ronald L., 'The Scottish Contribution to Marxist Sociology', in Meek, Ronald L., *Economics and Ideology and Other Essays: Studies in the Development of Economic Thought*, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1967), pp. 34-50.
- Meikle, Henry W., 'Voltaire and Scotland', *Etudes Anglaises*, 11 (1958), 193-201.
- O'Brien, Karen, 'Between Enlightenment and Stadial History: William Robertson on the History of Europe', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 16 (1993), 53-63.
- 'Robertson's Place in the Development of Eighteenth-Century Narrative History', in Brown, Stewart J., (ed.), *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp. 74-91.
- Oz-Salzbunger, Fania, 'National Identity in Scotland and Germany in the Late Eighteenth-Century', *Ideas, Inquiries, Aesthetics*, 2 (1996), 137-166.
- Pagden, Anthony, 'Identity Formation in Spanish America', in Canny, Nicholas and Pagden, Anthony, (eds), *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 51-93.
- Pascal, Roy, 'Property and Society: The Scottish Historical School of the Eighteenth Century', *Modern Quarterly*, 1 (1938), 167-179.
- Peers, Douglas M., 'Soldiers, Scholars and the Scottish Enlightenment: Militarism in Early Nineteenth-century India', *International History Review*, 16 (1994), 441-465.
- Phillipson, Nicholas, 'Adam Smith as Civic Moraliser', in Hont, Istvan and Ignatieff, Michael, (eds), *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1983), pp. 179-202.
- 'Politics, Politeness and the Anglicisation of Early Eighteenth-Century Scottish Culture', in Mason, Roger A., (ed.), *Scotland and England, 1286-1815*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1987), pp. 226-246.
- 'Providence and Progress: An Introduction to the Historical Thought of William Robertson', in Brown, Stewart J., (ed.), *William Robertson and*

- the Expansion of Empire*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp. 55-73.
- 'The Scottish Enlightenment', in Porter, Roy and Teich, Mikulas, (eds), *The Enlightenment in National Context*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1981), pp. 19-40.
- Pocock, J.G.A., 'Cambridge paradigms and Scottish Philosophers: A Study of the Relations between the Civic Humanist and the Civil Jurisprudential Interpretation of Eighteenth-Century Social Thought', in Hont, Istvan and Ignatieff, Michael, (eds), *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1983), pp. 235-252.
- 'Hume and the American Revolution: The Dying Thoughts of a North Briton', in Pocock, J.G.A., *Virtue, Commerce and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), pp. 125-143.
- 'Machiavelli, Harrington and English Political Ideologies', in Pocock, J.G.A., *Politics, Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History*, (New York: Athenaeum, 1971), pp. 104-147.
- 'Varieties of Whiggism from Exclusion to Reform: A History of Ideology and Discourse', in Pocock, J.G.A., *Virtue, Commerce and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), pp. 215-310.
- Raynor, David R., 'Hume and Robertson's *History of Scotland*', *British Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies*, 10 (1987), 59-63.
- Rendall, Jane, 'Scottish Orientalism from Robertson to James Mill', *Historical Journal*, 25 (1982), 43-69.
- Renwick, John, 'The Reception of William Robertson's Historical Writings in Eighteenth-Century France', in Brown, Stewart J., (ed.), *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp. 145-163.
- Riddy, John, 'Warren Hastings: Scotland's Benefactor?', in Carnall, Geoffrey and Nicholson, Colin, (eds), *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings: Papers from a Bicentenary Commemoration*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1989), pp. 30-57.
- Robertson, John, 'Andrew Fletcher's Vision of Union', in Mason, Roger A. (ed.), *Scotland and England, 1286-1815*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1987), pp. 203-225.
- 'An Elusive Sovereignty: The Course of the Union Debate in Scotland, 1698-1707', in Robertson, John, (ed.), *A Union for Empire: Political Thought and the British Union of 1707*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp. 198-227.
- 'Empire and Union: Two Concepts of the Early Modern European Political Order', in Robertson, John, (ed.), *A Union for Empire: Political Thought and the British Union of 1707*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), pp. 3-36.
- 'Introduction' in Fletcher of Saltoun, Andrew, *Political Works*, ed. by Robertson, John, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp. ix-xxx.
- 'The Scottish Enlightenment at the Limits of the Civic Tradition, in Hont, Istvan and Ignatieff, Michael, (eds), *Wealth and Virtue: the Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1983), pp. 137-178.
- Ronan, Charles E., 'Antonio de Alcedo: His Collaborators and his Letters to William Robertson', *Americas*, 34 (1977-1978), 470-501.
- Shapin, Steven, 'Property, Patronage and the Politics of Science: The Founding of the Royal Society of Edinburgh', *British Journal for the History of*

- Science*, 7 (1974), 1-41.
- Sher, Richard B., '1688 and 1788: William Robertson on Revolution in Britain and France', in Dukes, Paul and Dunkley, John, (eds), *Culture and Revolution*, (London and New York: Pinter Publishers, 1990), pp. 98-109.
- '“An Agreeable and Instructive Society”: Benjamin Franklin and Scotland', in Dwyer, John and Sher, Richard B., (eds), *Sociability and Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1993), pp. 181-193.
- 'Charles V and the Book Trade: An Episode in Enlightenment Print Culture', in Brown, Stewart J., (ed.), *William Robertson and the Expansion Of Empire*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp. 164-196.
- 'Moderates, Managers and Popular Politics in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh: The Drysdale “Bustle” of the 1760's', in Dwyer, John et al., (eds), *New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1982), pp. 179-202.
- 'Professors of Virtue: The Social History of the Edinburgh Moral Philosophy Chair in the Eighteenth Century', in Stewart, M.A., (ed.), *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment*, 2nd edn, (Oxford: OUP, 1998), pp. 87-126.
- 'Scottish Divines and Legal Lairds: Boswell's Scots Presbyterian Identity', in Clingham, G., (ed.), *New Light on Boswell: Critical and Historical Essays on the Occasion of the Bicenary of 'The Life of Johnson'*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), pp. 28-55.
- Sher, Richard B. and Murdoch, Alexander, 'Patronage and Party in the Church of Scotland, 1750-1800', in MacDougall, Norman, (ed.), *Church, Politics and Society: Scotland, 1408-1929*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1983), pp. 197-220.
- Sher, Richard B. and Stewart, M., 'William Robertson and David Hume: Three Letters', *Hume Studies*, 11 (1985), 69-86.
- Skinner, Quentin, 'The Origins of the Calvinist Theory of Revolution', in Malament, Barbara, (ed.), *After the Reformation: Essays in Honour of J.H. Hexter*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), pp. 309-330.
- Smith, Janet Adam, 'Some Eighteenth-Century Ideas of Scotland', in Phillipson, N.T. and Mitchison, Rosalind, (eds), *Scotland in the Age of Improvement: Essays in Scottish History in the Eighteenth Century*, 2nd edn, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1996), pp. 107-125.
- Smitten, Jeffrey R., 'Bibliography of Writings about William Robertson, 1755-1996', in Brown, Stewart J., (ed.), *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp. 231-267.
- 'Impartiality in Robertson's *History of America*, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 19 (1985), 56-77.
- 'Moderatism and History: William Robertson's Unfinished History of British America', in Sher, Richard B. and Smitten, Jeffrey R., *Scotland and America in the Age of Enlightenment*, (Edinburgh: EUP, pp. 163-179.
- 'Robertson's *History of Scotland*: Narrative Structure and the Sense of Reality', *CLIO*, 11 (1981), 29-47.
- 'Robertson's Letters and the Life of Writing', in Brown, Stewart J., (ed.), *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp. 36-54.
- 'The Shaping of Moderation: William Robertson and Arminianism',

- Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 22 (1985), 281-300.
- 'William Robertson', in Siebert, Donald T., *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, 2nd series, CIV: *British Prose Writers, 1660-1800*, (Detroit and London: Gale Research, 1991), pp. 260-268.
- Smout, T.C., 'Perspectives on the Scottish Identity', *Scottish Affairs*, 6 (1994), 101-113.
- Stevenson, David, 'The Early Covenanters and the Federal Union of Britain', in Mason, Roger A., (ed.), *Scotland and England, 1286-1815*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1987), pp. 163-181.
- Stewart, M.A., 'Introduction', in Stewart, M.A., (ed.), *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment*, 2nd edn, (Oxford: OUP, 1998), pp 1-9.
- Stimson, Frederick S., 'William Robertson's Influence on Early American Literature', *Americas*, 14 (1957-1958), 37-43.
- Todd, William B., 'Foreword', in Hume, David, *The History of England from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688*, ed. by Todd, William B., 6 vols, (Indianapolis: Liberty, 1983), I, pp. xi-xxii.
- Trevor-Roper, Hugh (Lord Dacre), 'The Historical Philosophy of the Enlightenment', *Studies in Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 27 (1963), 1667-1687.
- 'The Religious Origins of the Enlightenment', in Trevor-Roper, Hugh, *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change, and Other Essays*, 2nd edn, (London: Macmillan, 1972), pp. 193-236.
- 'The Scottish Enlightenment', *Studies in Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 58 (1967), 1635-1658.
- Venturi, Franco, 'Scottish Echoes in Eighteenth-Century Italy', in Hont, Istvan and Ignatieff, Michael, (eds), *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1983), pp. 345-362.
- Weisinger, Herbert, 'The Middle Ages and the Late Eighteenth-Century Historians', *Philological Quarterly*, 27 (1948), 63-79.
- Whelan, Frederick G., 'Robertson, Hume and the Balance of Power', *Hume Studies*, 21 (1995), 315-332.
- Williamson, Arthur H., 'George Buchanan, Civic Virtue and Commerce: European Imperialism and its Eighteenth-Century Critics', *Scottish Historical Review*, 75 (1996), 20-37.
- 'Scots, Indians and Empire: The Scottish Politics of Civilization, 1519-1609', *Past and Present*, 150 (1996), 46-83.
- Womersley, David, 'The Historical Writings of William Robertson', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 47 (1986), 497-505.

G) Theses

- Fearnley-Sander, Mary, *The Emancipation of the Mind: A View of the Reformation in Four Eighteenth-Century Historians* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Western Australia, 1977).
- Moore, Pauline, *The Nature of Theoretical History and its Application in the Works of William Robertson*, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1975).

